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THE WORKS

Of the late REVEREND

Mr ROBERT RICCALTOUN,

Miniſter of the Goſpel at Hobkirk.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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AND

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A

TREATISE

on the GENERAL PLAN of

REVELATION.

CHAPTER I.

Revelation founded on Fact.

THE wiſdom of the firſt ages, for more than two thouſand years, conſiſted in a manner entirely in the knowledge, or rather the belief, of certain facts handed down from one generation to another. Upon theſe their ſentiments, and conſequently their affections and paſſions, were formed: and thence the whole of their religion, and what is now called *morality*, the whole of their conduct, both in relation to God and their neighbour, was regulated and directed.

It can hardly be imagined, that any traditions, however authentic in their ori-

ginal, could be conveyed through ſuch hands as even the beſt of men are, without ſome very material alterations. And accordingly two proviſions were made for their preſervation: *firſt*, The longevity of the firſt men, and the frequent familiar appearances of celeſtial beings to, and converſations with them; to which may be added, the rites and obſervances of their religious worſhip, until the wiſe director of all found it proper to reduce them into writing, begun by Moſes, carried on from time to time by the prophets, and finiſhed by Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles; and, *ſecondly*, A people ſeparated from the reſt of mankind, and inveſted with very diſtinguiſhing privileges, for this very end, to be witneſſes for God, and to preſerve in their purity thoſe divine oracles, which were committed to them with ſuch circumſtances as could leave no doubt of their divine original, and the authority by which they were eſtabliſhed, ſuch as never attended any other facts whatſoever; and that nation was ſo wiſely placed in the midſt of the then habitable world, and the neighbourhood of thoſe ſtates which had extended their trade and navigation fartheſt, that all

all the inhabitants of the earth had, or might have had, eaſy acceſs to recover the truth of their traditions, however they might have been corrupted, or even altogether loſt.

In fact, we find that this was the way which the ancient Greeks took for acquiring knowledge. Travelling was their beſt courſe of education; and their travels lay all one way. Egypt, and the neighbourhood of Canaan, were the places they frequented; and he who could give the beſt account of their traditions, was the wiſeſt man. And thence, we have good reaſon to think, theſe veſtiges of truth were taken which are ſo much admired in ancient writings. Thus, however, things went on, until a generation of men aroſe, who, aſſuming the then modeſt name of *philoſophers*, and ſcorning to take any thing upon truſt, would needs fall a-reaſoning, as they called it, on facts greatly above their reach, and where they could have no *data* to ſupport them. In conſequence whereof, the principal facts were either rejected as impoſſible, or explained away into a conſiſtency with their own low and miſtaken notions or imaginations. Thus,

profeſſing themſelves wiſe, they became fools; and the knowledge of the true God, and of all the concerns of the ſpiritual and eternal world, was in effect totally loſt; inſomuch that the very writings of Moſes and the prophets were, by the generality of that people to whom they were committed, greatly perverted from their original intention, and made void by their fooliſh traditions.

Such was the unhappy ſtate of mankind when Jeſus Chriſt came into the world; who, by himſelf, and his diſciples, ſo fully vindicated the original truth, that now, one would have thought, there was effectual proviſion made againſt all corruptions and abuſes for ever; eſpecially when theſe ſtandards of ſacred truth came to be tranſlated into vulgar tongues, and lodged in every hand. Thus, we are told, the primitive Chriſtians, contenting themſelves with the ſimplicity of faith, made it their ſole buſineſs to improve the facts which they believed; to form their hearts and lives upon them, into a converſation becoming the goſpel of Chriſt, which comprehended them all, and ſet them in their proper light.

But

But many ages had not paſſed, until the ſame ſort of men treated the written revelation much in the ſame manner as their predeceſſors had done the traditional one; and ſetting out as they did, upon this very fallacious principle, That no man can believe what he does not underſtand, or underſtand any thing of which he has not clear and diſtinct *ideas*, as the images we form of external objects are called, they found themſelves obliged, either flatly to deny, or explain away the moſt momentous facts, however ſtrongly ſupported, on which Chriſtianity, or indeed any religion, can ſtand. It is palpably certain, that we can have no idea at all, much leſs a clear and diſtinct one, of any thing, but what we can imagine, or form ſome image of; and that cannot poſſibly go any further than material objects, whatever notions or conceptions we may form by deſcription, or analogy and reſemblance; and where theſe fail, there ſhould be an end both of our knowledge and our faith, and a ſtrong foundation laid for ſetting aſide all the numerous ſingular facts recorded in the holy ſcriptures, and even that on which all religion reſts, the being

being of a God, who is the creator and proprietor of all things in heaven and earth.

Our modern philoſophers indeed, taking the advantage of that light which revelation has given, undertake boldly, not only to diſcover the being of God, but to make out a complete character of him in all his perfections, with all the evidence of demonſtration. And it muſt be acknowledged, they have ſaid many plauſible things. But as the belief of ſome being which is called *God* has been in the world ever ſince there were men in it, all that is left for them is, to try what can be ſaid for or againſt it. This is a quite different thing from finding out a fact altogether unknown; a province that reaſon was never made for; and which indeed cannot poſſibly be done, but by bringing it ſome how under our obſervation; and that cannot be done, but either by bringing it within the reach of our perceptive powers, or by the information of others: and when the moſt momentous facts on which the proper evidence of the divine being and diſtinguiſhing character reſts, are conſidered, they will be found to be

be ſuch as none but himſelf could either know, or give information about.

I may not inſiſt here on a preſumption, which yet carries ſtronger conviction againſt their pretenſions, than all their reaſonings and demonſtrations can ever do for them, viz. That the united attempts of all the very great men who had not acceſs to the written record, could never bring, not to ſay the world, but even any one of themſelves, to any tolerable knowledge of the true God. The higheſt of their attainment was, to aſcribe the traditional epithets of *Optimus Maximus*, the beſt and greateſt, to what they called *God*. But who or what that being was, or even what true goodneſs and greatneſs are, neither they, nor any of their modern ſucceſſors, have ever been able to ſay, without aſſuming a fact which they could never have known, or imagined, unleſs they had been told of it, viz. that this univerſe, with all the fullneſs of it, was once nothing, and had no being until he gave it, and made every thing there to be what it is: A fact ſo ſingular in its nature, and which required a kind of power ſo infinitely above what is known to man,

and

and which ſo far ſurpaſſes all human apprehenſion, that there is no imaginable way by which ſo much as a ſuſpicion of it could ever have entered into any one's head; nor could any proper information be given about it, but by the creator himſelf: and yet upon this ſuppoſition all their reaſonings are founded which have any weight, or that can make any laſting impreſſion.

It is true, there have been very high pretenſions made to religion, and even devotion, on theſe principles; not only by thoſe who could know no better, but by thoſe among ourſelves who certainly might. A noted late writer has given us what I think ſo juſt an account of this, that I chuſe to deliver it in his own words. "Philoſophical devotion, like the enthu-
"ſiaſm of a poet, is the tranſitory effect
"of high ſpirits, great leiſure, a fine ge-
"nius, and a habit of ſtudy and con-
"templation. But, notwithſtanding all
"theſe circumſtances, an abſtracted invi-
"ſible object, like that which natural re-
"ligion alone preſents us, cannot long
"actuate the mind, or be of any great
"moment in life. To render the paſſion

"of

" of continuance, we muſt find ſome me-
" thod of affecting the ſenſes and imagi-
" nation, and muſt embrace ſome hiſtori-
" cal as well as philoſophical account of
" the Divinity." Not one of a thouſand, I believe I may ſay a million, of mankind, can be found capable of entering into the metaphyſical refinements they build on. The multitude muſt live either by ſenſe or faith; and either continue quite ignorant of the Deity, or make out his character as they do that of men whom they never ſaw; that is, by his works and ways: and if they have not a true hiſtory of theſe, they will be ſure to make one for themſelves, as fully appears by the groſs conceits and fooliſh legends of the acts of what they called their *Gods*, made and propagated not only in the Heathen, but ſome other places of the world.

But however this diſpoſition may be abuſed, it is by no means to be reckoned among the corruptions, or even infirmities, of the human nature; but the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of that conſtitution our wiſe creator ſaw fit to aſſign us, for anſwering the purpoſes for which he deſigned us in his world; and which, accordingly, he

initiates every one of us into, by the way in which we enter there; where, incapable for a long time of judging or acting for ourſelves, a great part of our lives muſt neceſſarily be ſpent in an implicit faith in, and dependence upon, thoſe to whoſe care we are committed: nay, after all the obſervations we can make for ourſelves, even in the higheſt ſtate of improvement, we would find ourſelves but very ill provided, even for living in a preſent world, were it not for the informations we receive from others. But how ſhall we attain the knowledge of the inviſible God, whom no man hath ſeen or can ſee? And how can he manifeſt himſelf to us, but by ſuch works and ways as we are capable of perceiving, and by which we may be enabled to form ſome proper apprehenſions of his being and perfections? A true and authentic hiſtory of theſe muſt therefore be the beſt gift that can be made to creatures in our circumſtances.

Such a hiſtory of God we have in the Bible; and they miſtake it greatly who conſider it in any other light. Whatever accounts we have either of nations and kingdoms, or of particular men, were not deſigned to give us their hiſtory, but only

only ſo much of it as was neceſſary to ſet God's ways with them in ſuch a light, as that we might learn from thoſe inſtances, what to think of *him*, and what we have to hope or fear from him in ſimilar circumſtances. All the facts we have there recorded are not indeed of equal moment; but none of them may be deemed ſuperfluous. Some capital ones there are, without which, God cannot be known at all. But others contribute to the more perfect knowledge of him, and all together make up a ſyſtem of perfect wiſdom, and naturally lead to the great diſcovery of what all the philoſophers and wiſe men, ancient and modern, have laboured in vain to find out, viz. where the true perfection and happineſs of mankind lies; for theſe two can never ſubſiſt ſeparately. But then it muſt be adverted to, that none of theſe facts muſt be taken ſeparately, and without taking in the whole. Attempts of this kind have miſled many. There is not only a cloſe connection, but ſuch a beautiful order and dependence, that one fact ſupports and opens the mind to conceive another, which by itſelf might have ſeemed abſolutely incredible. Of this there are

numberleſs inſtances, which I may not enter upon here; ſome will occur as we go along.

In the knowledge, belief, and proper improvement, of theſe facts, the whole of Chriſtianity conſiſts. A plain ſimple thing, which needs no philoſophy or human ſcience to ſupport its principles. There is not in the whole Bible one ſingle inſtance of that kind of reaſoning. Much and ſtrong reaſoning we do indeed find there; but all of a quite different kind. It is all employed, either in ſupporting the truth of the facts, or enforcing the proper conſequences and improvement of them. And it had been much to be wiſhed, that thoſe who have employed themſelves in the great and laudable deſign of opening the ſcriptures, had guarded more carefully than has been generally done, againſt thoſe mixtures of human wiſdom which we find ſo frequently and ſtrongly cautioned againſt by our Lord and his apoſtles, by which the ſimplicity and beauty of the truth as it is in Jeſus have been at leaſt greatly ſullied and obſcured, Chriſtianity moulded into the form of an human ſcience, a wide door opened for numberleſs unneceſſary, and many of them endleſs,

leſs, debates and controverſies, the true ſpirit of it loſt in bitter contentions and diviſions, and mens faith drawn off from the only foundation on which it can ſtand, the teſtimony of God, to build on the gueſſes or bold aſſertions of the reaſoners and diſputers of this world.

And yet ſuch is the tyranny of cuſtom and received opinions, that many learned and good men have thought, that natural religion, as the philoſophical is pretended very unjuſtly to be, is the only foundation on which Chriſtianity can ſtand: for, ſay they, how can we know any thing to be a divine revelation, or receive it as ſuch, until we know there is a God; nay, till we know ſo much of his nature and perfections as ſhall qualify us to judge, what is worthy of him, and what not? Without this, we lie open to every impoſtor or deluded enthuſiaſt who ſhall take it into his head to pretend a divine commiſſion, and his reveries may paſs with us for divine oracles.

Need I obſerve, what is ſo glaringly evident, that this is ſo far from ſending us to learn our knowledge of God from the ſcriptures of truth, that theſe can be of

no

no uſe, until we are taught it by ſome philoſopher or other, on principles too not only different from, but in many inſtances oppoſite to, thoſe we are taught in the Bible, and which muſt be unlearned and renounced before one can become a Chriſtian? For however the worldly ſanctuary might be built and beautified with the ſpoils of the Egyptians, the heavenly one admits of no ſuch materials. We may not believe the Bible until we know that it is the word of God; and it is certain no man ever will: but then, before we can be determined in this great point, we muſt not only know that there is ſome being we call *God*, but we muſt know the true God. Nor will even this be of any uſe to us, until we know certainly that this is his teſtimony; and there our faith is ſuppoſed to reſt. But however we may be ſuppoſed to reſt our belief of the particular facts recorded there on the teſtimony of God; yet it is plain, that this belief is ultimately, and not very remotely, founded on what we learned before we could believe a word that is ſpoken there. God, by the prophet Jeremy, gives a very different ſolution of this intereſting queſtion,

ſtion. " He that hath a dream, let him " tell a dream; and he that hath my word, " let him ſpeak my word boldly: what " is the chaff to the wheat? Is not my " word like a fire? like a hammer which " breaketh the rocks aſunder?" Jer. xxiii. 28. 29. The Apoſtle Paul, who ſpake by the ſame Spirit, ſpeaks alſo the ſame language, and reſolves the Chriſtian faith, not into the *wiſdom of words*, or human reaſoning, which he carefully avoided; but into the *demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power*. But this is a kind of evidence that no man can perceive but he that feels it. Nor is that a ſingular caſe: for the light of the ſun, and the noiſe and variety of ſounds, to both which we find it compared, are preciſely of the ſame kind; and as the great creator manifeſts his glory to whom and in what meaſure he pleaſes, he can with the greateſt eaſe make them perceive and feel what the blind and deaf can have no notion of.

Certain it is, however, that in the whole Bible, from the beginning to the end of it, the queſtion is never ſo much as inſinuated, Whether there is a God or not? nor any ſuch thing offered as philoſophers call a proof

proof or a demonſtration of it. But there is a much eaſier and incomparably more effectual method taken for eſtabliſhing this momentous and fundamental truth. By manifeſting himſelf, as he does, in his works and ways, and thus ſhowing what he is, he effectually aſcertains the truth of his being, not only to the underſtanding, as philoſophers attempt to do, but to the conſcience, the inward ſenſe and feeling of men. The very firſt ſentence of that divine record reveals a fact which all the wiſdom of man could never have diſcovered, and which no philoſopher will ever be able to demonſtrate, even when it is known: "In the beginning God created "the heavens and the earth:" A fact, without which, all reaſoning from the works of God muſt go for nothing, as they muſt do, until it is aſcertained that they are really his. But when it is, we are provided with the moſt ſenſible documents of his eternal power and godhead, ſuch as muſt fill every heart with reverence and adoration who really believes it.

The divine author knew perfectly how hard it is for creatures ſuch as we are, to believe a fact every way ſo ſingular, and

ſo

ſo infinitely above all the powers that we can have any notion of. For preventing what was thought a very plauſible notion, that creating was no more but reducing the confuſed heap of matter into that beautiful order in which we now find it, he tells us, that after his creating the heavens and the earth, the matter remained ſtill in the greateſt confuſion, until it was, by degrees, which none but the creator himſelf could deſcribe, reduced to regularity and order. And, which made the wonderful work yet more wonderful, all was performed without either inſtruments or means, but purely by an authoritative word, or a mere act of his will.

This muſt ſtand an invincible argument, That the creation of all things depends purely on the credit of divine teſtimony, unleſs a ſatisfying account can be given how ſuch a hiſtory of it could be made by man. And the more attempts are made this way, the more I am ſatisfied will the evidence of it appear. By the circumſtances we have recorded of the creator's familiar intercourſe with the firſt man, we have reaſon to believe, he was very thoroughly inſtructed in all he was ca-

pable of knowing about it. But, in the courſe of time, it came to be ſo much either forgotten or neglected, and the blindneſs and folly of man become ſo rampant, that not only the works of God, the powers of the heavens, but their own imaginations and fancies were ſet up to rival the creator in his Deity and worſhip: A monſtrous wickedneſs in them; but from which mankind reaped very great advantages, as it gave occaſion to thoſe numerous exertions of divine power, whereby God confounded the idolaters, and inſtructed his being the creator of heaven and earth, and thereby his deity and abſolute power, or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, "his eternal power and godhead." It would be of great uſe to obſerve, what would take up too much room here, how the conteſt was carried on with the apoſtate world in general, and particularly with the Iſraelitiſh nation down to the captivity, with the ſtrongeſt means of conviction on one ſide, and the moſt aſtoniſhing perverſeneſs on the other.

It was never diſputed, that the creator of all things, if there was any ſuch, was the true God; and himſelf puts it on this iſſue:

iſſue: "The gods who have not created "the heavens and the earth, ſhall periſh "from the earth." There is another poſition laid down as indiſputable, That he who has in his own hand all the power that is in the univerſe, muſt be the creator, and the true God: and that all power in heaven and earth are thus in the hand of God, he has inſtructed by the moſt palpable and moſt convincing evidence, doing what none but the poſſeſſor of almighty power could do, and ſhewing ſuch perfect knowledge of all things, as none but he who made all things could poſſibly attain.

Thus he has ſhown, in a manner that might be perceived even by the moſt ſtupid obſervers, that all the powers of what is called *nature*, are ſo abſolutely in his poſſeſſion, that he can controul them at pleaſure, ſuſpend, and even invert them, for anſwering any purpoſes for which he ſees fit to employ them. We may not ſtand particularly to obſerve how effectually this was done in the deſtruction and reſtoration of the earth at the general deluge; the deſtruction of Sodom, and the other cities of that plain, which was

like the garden of God; the aſtoniſhing plagues of Egypt; the opening a paſſage for the Iſraelites through the Red ſea; the pillar of fire and cloud; giving them manna for food, and water out of the rock; with all the wonders at Sinai; ſtopping the courſe of the ſun; or, what argues an equal, if not a ſuperior exertion of power, the courſe of the light, as in the caſe of Joſhua, Hezekiah, and others; Elijah's conteſt with the prieſts of Baal; and the more ordinary fire from heaven conſuming the accepted ſacrifices. To which muſt be added, all the miracles recorded in the Old and New Teſtaments, which ſtand as ſo many ſenſible documents of creating power.

But the Iſraelitiſh nation itſelf was the greateſt miracle of all. From their firſt ſeparation from the nations in their father Abraham, down to the captivity; and, we may add, down to this very day; they were, and are, ſtanding monuments of the creator's power; and that not only over inanimate matter, but over nations and kingdoms, the counſels, purpoſes, and powers of men, even in thoſe which are allowed to be their freeſt and moſt deliberate

berate actions; turning them and employing them so as to answer his purposes and intentions; raising up and casting down at pleasure unto all the ends of the earth. The prosperity and adversity of that nation exactly conform to the promises and threatenings of their law; the strengthening the hands of their enemies, and destroying them at pleasure; and the numberless instances of his determining the hearts of men to serve his purposes, are all of them instances of the surprising power of the great creator; and prove, that "the earth is the Lord's, and the ful-"ness thereof:" for he giveth it, and all the kingdoms of it, to whomsoever he will. And that none may imagine that these things come to pass by what is called chance, or the common course of things, he beforehand tells what he is to do, and thus secures the honour of it entirely to himself; not to say that in most of these events the hand of God is so visible, that it cannot be mistaken.

There is yet another point which we find the creator himself appealing to as decisive in this case: it is his perfect knowledge, not only of the present state

of

of things, but of all that is paſſed and forgotten among men, and of all that ever ſhall be unto the end of time. Inſtances we have of both kinds in the facts recorded by Moſes, and the many prophecies which have been fulfilled, and many more which relate to events yet to fall out in their proper time. And thus we find him pleading againſt the idols of the nations, and their thoughtleſs votaries: "Bring forth your ſtrong reaſons, ſaith the God of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and ſhew us what ſhall happen: let them ſhew the former things, that we may conſider them.—Shew the things which are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods," Iſ. xli. 21. 22. 23. This, it is evident, cannot be done but upon one of two ſuppoſitions; either that all things are under his direction and diſpoſal, or that he hath ſuch a perfect knowledge of them, that he can certainly ſay what effects will follow. In either caſe, ſuch power and knowledge can belong to none but the creator.

At the ſame time that we have this great foundation of all religion atteſted by ſuch plain and palpable evidence, we have

have another advantage: by having a power ſo analogous and ſimilar to that by which the worlds were created, brought under our obſervation, the belief of creation is greatly facilitated; as it effectually removes that prejudice which is ſome how become in a manner natural, againſt believing any effects of power to which we have never obſerved any thing ſimilar: and further, by unqueſtioned inſtances of ſimilar powers, and very nearly of the ſame kind, the mind is in an eaſy, and almoſt inſenſible manner, led up to the juſteſt notions of that God we profeſs to worſhip, as a being eſſentially poſſeſſed of perfect and abſolute power, not to be controlled by any, or all other powers put together. And thus, in that ancient Chriſtian creed bearing the name of the Apoſtles, the article, *I believe in God the Father almighty*, ſtands without any other addition but the ground on which it is believed, *the maker of heaven and earth.*

Our modern wiſe men, alarmed, as would ſeem, by the dreadful conſequences of abſolute power lodged in a weak fallible man, have raiſed a horrible cry againſt aſcribing it to God, and given it

names

names which I do not chuſe to repeat. But had they adverted to a very obvious truth, That all imperfection whatſoever is owing entirely to the want of power, they would eaſily have ſeen, that perfect or abſolute power and abſolute perfection are but different words for the very ſame thing. The diſtinction between what they call natural and moral perfections, whatever foundation it may have in created conſtitutions, can by no means apply to him in whom all perfections are equally eſſential, however the weakneſs of our apprehenſions may lead us to conceive of them.

CHAP. II.

Ignorance of Abſtract Nature. Ignorance of Divine Nature, Power, or Works. Knowledge conveyed by Images. The true ſtate of Creature-dependence.

BUT after all, however ſtrong the evidences of this great truth are, and they are indeed the ſtrongeſt which creatures of our kind are capable of receiving, the

the thing itſelf remains an impenetrable myſtery, how a world, ſuch as this, could be brought into being, when there were no materials either to work upon, or to work by: and yet more, that it ſhould be done by the bare word, or rather the bare will, of the creator. This is a ſecret which muſt for ever remain with him who is perfect in underſtanding, and who alone can know the extent of his own power. And yet the eternity of the world, or even of the matter of which it conſiſts, would be ſtill as inconceivable, and conſequently as great, or rather a greater myſtery, and therefore as hard to be believed: only with this difference, that the exiſtence of the material world is more obvious than that of the inviſible creator.

This naturally leads us into depths, if poſſible, ſtill greater, the impenetrable ſecrets of the divine being: He created the heavens and the earth, and that gave a beginning to them, and to what we call time, by which their duration or continuance in being is computed. But the creator himſelf then was: nay, infinitely beyond the utmoſt diſtance that can be i-

magined, he did exiſt. Accordingly it is ſaid of him, If. lvii. 15. that "he inhabiteth eternity;" and by the Apoſtle, 1 Tim. vi. 16. "He only hath immortality;" which laſt expreſſion excludes, not only end of being, but all not-being. But who can reach the full import of theſe words? The diſtinguiſhing name by which he choſe to be known in the firſt ages, JEHOVAH, is with good reaſon thought to expreſs his very eſſence; and his anſwer to Moſes, when he wanted to know his name, is a ſort of paraphraſe of it; which the Apoſtle John renders, *He that is, and was, and is to come.* And thus it comes out, as if he had ſaid, *I am he that is*, or, *he who is being:* and that is ſomething more than to ſay, he is the ſole proprietor and poſſeſſor of being; it imports, that being is his very eſſence. Much to the ſame purpoſe is the title we find him ſo often aſſuming of, *The Living God*; not only to diſtinguiſh himſelf from dead idols, but eſpecially to ſet himſelf forth to our faith, as the abſolute proprietor, and therefore the only ſpring and fountain of life, as well as of being. And thus we find our Lord giving it as the

the diſtinguiſhing character of the true God, "That he hath life in himſelf."

Thus we are provided in a ſet of words, very important indeed, and full of inſtruction, were they well underſtood, and which we uſe as freely as if we really did underſtand them. Life and being are ſuch familiar terms, that, I believe, there are not a few men in the world who would think themſelves greatly affronted, if there was ſo much as a ſuſpicion inſinuated, that they did not comprehend what they were ſpeaking of. By this pittance of being and life which we find ourſelves one way or other in poſſeſſion of, we come to know ſomething what it is to be, and to live. But theſe are only the effects and conſequences of life and being; and what they are in themſelves, and how even our own life and being are maintained and ſupported, we know no more than the child which never had a thought: A ſtrong preſumption, or rather a certain document, that all muſt be reſolved into the inexplicable and incomprehenſible exertion of creating power. And if all continues a myſtery there, ſo near home, how much more myſterious muſt the eſſence and manner of ſubſiſting

be in him who dwells in light inacceſſible, which no man can approach unto.

The narrowneſs and ſhort extent of the human capacity might eaſily be, and often has been, carried much farther, and inexplicable myſteries found, throughout the whole frame of even the material world; and, what is neareſt us, our own frame and conſtitution; inſomuch that philoſophers to this day have never been able to ſay what matter is, or what our ſouls are, or how they come to be united to theſe groſs bodies. It muſt appear very odd, that men ſhould with ſuch confidence deny the belief of *myſteries*, or ſuch things as they can make no account of, when they themſelves are without any ſcruple aſſenting to myſteries every day they live. But moſt ſtrange it is, that any who believe that the worlds were created by the word of God, and the eternity and immenſity of his being, ſhould yet boggle at the information given us concerning the manner in which that incomprehenſible being ſubſiſts, which has nothing more of myſtery, or leſs intelligible; I mean, a trinity of diſtinct agents

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in the unity of the divine eſſence, ſubſiſting and acting in and by one another.

It can be no juſt prejudice againſt the firmeſt belief of this, that we have nothing ſimilar within the compaſs of our obſervation that we can image it by: for it is no more ſingular than theſe other facts which we have no doubt about, viz. the immenſity of the divine being, and creating power; and is inſtructed preciſely in the ſame manner by facts which fall eaſily under our obſervation, and the record we have concerning them; where we find Three, very expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from one another, dignified with all the divine names, titles, attributes, and honours, and all the works, not excepting creation itſelf, by which the only true God has choſen to diſtinguiſh himſelf, and make himſelf known to men. Or ſhall we believe, that a perfectly wiſe and good being would lay ſuch a ſnare for miſleading his creatures, and drawing them into a crime he has expreſſed ſuch an abhorrence of, the ſetting up other gods before him?

But the main prejudice which has had the greateſt ſhare in biaſſing numbers againſt

gainſt the belief of this myſtery, will, I apprehend, be found to ariſe from the imperfection of our language, and the terms in which it is expreſſed there. The word *God*, in our language, has no determinate ſignification; but, like the proper names of men, is made uſe of to denote that being whom we profeſs to worſhip. *Perſon* again, in vulgar, and even philoſophical language, denotes one individual agent. This makes it very hard to avoid apprehending three perſons as three gods. The Hebrews had greatly the advantage of us in this reſpect. They had a name, JEHOVAH, which denominated the divine eſſence, and is always ſingular, and this JEHOVAH is always declared to be one. But they had another name, which denoted the relation which he condeſcended to ſtand in to his creatures of mankind, and expreſſeth the obligation he had taken upon himſelf to make good the promiſes which he had made them, and which we know were to be fulfilled by the Word and Spirit, as well as by the Father: and this has conſtantly a plural termination, *Elohim*; not for want of a ſingular term, which the author of it could never have been at a loſs for, and which it is not conceivable

ceivable he would have chosen in his addresses to a people so prone to fall into idolatry and polytheism as the old Israelites were, had it not been to express an important truth, that though *Jehovah* the essence is one, yet the *Elahim* are more than one.

But neither will it be found strictly true, that there is nothing in nature any way resembling this mystery; though it should be enough to make it credible, that there is nothing found there that can warrant us to conclude it impossible. This material system, and the material powers and under-agents by which the order the wise creator has appointed is supported and maintained, we have great reason to believe, was designed for a representation of the spiritual unseen world, and of that (to us inconceivable) order by which all things are carried on there; upon this general principle, that what the sun is to the material, the same God is to the spiritual world. And upon this the whole of the descriptive language we have of spiritual and unseen things, is in great measure formed; and by a very natural analogy, all our conceptions of these things are likewise formed. What Moses calls

calls by a name which we render *expanſion*, or *firmament*, and which from him we learn is the matter of the material heavens, moſt perfect wiſdom has formed into a moſt ſtupendous machine, by which all things throughout the ſyſtem are managed and carried on in their proper order. We ſee it, and very ſenſibly feel it is ſo in this earth of ours. We cannot ſubſiſt a moment without air to breathe in; and were the compreſſion it makes taken off, we know, by eaſy experiments, how the earth itſelf muſt be diſſipated, and every thing diſſolved into that ſtate of confuſion in which the whole matter of the univerſe was originally created, when the earth was without form, and void, and darkneſs was upon the face of the deep. Were it even poſſible that air could ſubſiſt without light, we certainly know it could anſwer none of thoſe purpoſes, nor produce thoſe viciſſitudes and changes which we find ſo neceſſary for adorning the earth, as it is every ſeaſon, and for making it uſeful to the inhabitants. We know as well, that there can be no light but what iſſues from, and is ſent forth by the force of, fire, and that that cannot be ſupported but by a flux of air continually ſtreaming into

into it; and which is ſo loſt there, that no account can be made of it, but that it is refined there, and thrown out again in the form of light; which again, by degrees, coaleſces into ſuch grumes as conſtitute air. Thus this wonderful machine ſupports itſelf and every thing elſe. The ſun, or fire at its orb, is the great regulator, but operates only by the light it ſends forth, and is ſupported and maintained by the air which is formed out of it. The matter is the ſame; but their form and diſtinct offices ſenſibly diſtinguiſh them; and thus ſubſiſt and act in perfect union, in and by one another.

When we compare this, and the effects produced by this wonderful combination, with the accounts we have made, in language formed upon it, of the nature and operations of the great creator, it will not be eaſy for any one to avoid concluding, that in theſe material under-agents he deſigned to give us a ſenſible image of himſelf, and the way in which he exerts his almighty power. Our God dwells in light inacceſſible, which no man can approach unto: and we are told expreſsly, that he is a conſuming fire. His eternal Word

manifeſted in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt is almoſt every where ſtyled, *The Light of the world*; and by him it is that every thing is done which the Father does. The original languages have but one name for the material air, and that eternal Spirit by whom the Father and the Word perform and finiſh all their operations on the creature.

There can hardly be a greater and more dangerous impoſition upon ourſelves and others, than the attempting to reduce theſe analogical deſcriptions of ſpiritual and unſeen things, by which only we can come at any conceptions of them at all, to ſo many metaphors, ſuch as the maſters of human eloquence uſe for embelliſhing their diſcourſes. So far from it, that they are not only different in kind, but very nearly oppoſite to, and inconſiſtent with, one another. If both the terms of a metaphor are not perfectly known, the brilliancy and force of it is entirely loſt. Here it is juſt the reverſe. What is meant to be diſcovered in this way, is altogether unknown; neither can it be known any other way than by the image which repreſents it, and by which we may

may be helped to form ſuch conceptions as the imperfection of our conſtitution can admit of; and we have proper directions given us how to avoid the abuſe of ſuch images, and forming unworthy notions of what they were employed to repreſent.

It is not at all needful, that the plain Chriſtian ſhould be perplexed with the many curious ſpeculations and diſputes which men of learning and leiſure have raiſed on this head of creation, and the conſequences of it; but there is one which muſt by no means be neglected, viz. the nature and conſequences of creature-dependence, as there is no one thing of more general uſe on every occaſion throughout all the ſtages of the Chriſtian life. And were not our minds ſome how or other biaſſed and prepoſſeſſed, we muſt have been naturally led to think, that nothing can preſerve a creature in life and being but the ſame power that firſt beſtowed them. Indeed, being and life are none of thoſe things that can be given away, but muſt remain in the hand of the only proprietor: and yet ſuch is the luſt after independency, that many have per-

ſuaded themſelves, that they cannot be diſpoſſeſſed, but by an exertion of power equal to that of creation; nay, and that they cannot be juſtly deprived of theſe, unleſs they forfeit them by ſome crime or other. And it is on this ſlippery bottom that all the philoſophers hopes are founded. But they might have been better taught, had they condeſcended to obſerve, what cannot eſcape the notice of the moſt ignorant, and which the wiſe creator has ſet as a check to our pride and ſelf-conceit, viz. that wiſe order he has fixed, that no creature can ſubſiſt in life but by thoſe means which he has ordained, and which he bleſſes for that purpoſe. We muſt be very inadvertent, if we do not perceive, that thoſe upon which we ſo ſenſibly feel our dependence, and eſpecially the mechaniſm of the heavens, are only the under-agents, or the inſtruments by which the creator exerts that ſupporting power, without which we cannot ſuſtain ourſelves for a moment.

This will appear yet more evident, when it is conſidered, that the whole of creation is a matter of pure grace; that is, of abſolute will and pleaſure. The

word

word *grace* has been ſome how, eſpecially of late, ſo appropriated to that merciful kindneſs manifeſted to ſinners in Jeſus Chriſt, that ſome have thought it a ſort of profanation to apply it to any thing elſe. But we have greatly better authority for extending it to every favour, or inſtance of kindneſs, that the creator freely confers on any creature capable of obſerving and being affected with it; and for ſuch, we are well enough inſtructed to ſay, the world was made. In its natural import, it expreſſes not only the ſpring and fountain of the divine beneficence, (for nothing can be called grace which is not ſovereignly free), but likewiſe the fruit and effect of it; that is, the putting forth ſuch a meaſure of power as makes good the intention or declaration of grace: I ſay, the declaration and intention; becauſe a gift freely given, without any previous declaration, is juſt as truly a grace or favour, as if it had been given in conſequence of the moſt ſolemn promiſe. And thus it coincides with what is commonly called the *bleſſing* of God, another common word, little underſtood, I am afraid, or little minded. Mens bleſſing one another is a kind of image

mage of it. In its loweſt ſenſe, it is a ſignification of great good-will and hearty kindneſs and affection. But if it is not ſeconded with kind offices to the utmoſt of one's power, all the good words will hardly be allowed to be indications of a kind intention. And where then can the excellency of the divine bleſſing lie, but in that divine power which actually conveys the bleſſing? and therefore they whom he condeſcends to bleſs, are bleſſed indeed. I believe there is not one man in his wits who will not readily acknowledge, that the conſervation of the univerſe, and of every creature therein, is owing entirely to the bleſſing of God: and yet this acknowledgement, if it hath any meaning at all, plainly amounts to this, that every creature ſubſiſts by the ſame grace of the creator, and conſequently by the ſame almighty power, which gave it being at firſt. Hence then it muſt follow, that if any creature attempts to live in any other way, he renounces his dependence, and the only way in which he can live.

And hence it muſt follow of courſe, that as it was abſolutely free to the creator, whether he ſhould make any creatures

tures at all, and as he was abſolute maſter and proprietor of his own grace; ſo he had a perfect right to deal out his favours in what meaſure and degree he pleaſed; that is, to make what, and how many, kinds and orders of creatures he pleaſed; to aſſign each of them their proper ſtations, and the purpoſes they were to anſwer there; the term of their duration, and continuance in life and being, and the appropriated means (where he has been pleaſed to appoint any means) for ſupporting them during that period. I ſaid, where he has been pleaſed to appoint any means; becauſe, had he ſo pleaſed, he could eaſily have ſupported them by his almighty immediate power, without any created means, as he doth thoſe happy ſpirits who have acceſs to behold his glory. But where he has appointed means, if theſe are neglected, or if the creature takes it into his head to live ſome other way, as by means which the creator has not bleſſed for that purpoſe, it is evident, that in either caſe ſuch creature muſt periſh. Thus every creature carries in its moſt perfect exiſtence ſo much of his original nothingneſs, that it

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muſt argue either the greateſt ſtupidity or perverſeneſs ever to loſe ſight of it.

As then it appears, that no creature is, or can poſſibly be, the proprietor of its own being; far leſs can it have any property in any thing elſe. That muſt reſt in him of whom it muſt be acknowledged, that all things in heaven and earth are his. His, I ſay, by the beſt and moſt perfect right; for he created them all, and for his pleaſure they are, and were created. He has allowed his creatures the uſe of ſuch things as are fit for them, and that is all they need, or indeed are capable of enjoying. Whatever he puts into any one's hands, is either by way of loan, which he may reſume when he pleaſes, or is a truſt committed to them, for which they muſt give account. This indeed founds and ſecures what is called *property* among men, but cannot affect the right of the great proprietor.

Hence will appear, with great evidence, the fillineſs of thoſe exceptions which have been raiſed againſt thoſe exertions of this divine right we have recorded in the ſacred hiſtory, which they in their great wiſdom cannot reconcile to the rules of property

property and juſtice eſtabliſhed among men; as if it was not lawful for the great proprietor to do what he will with his own. And this will appear in a yet ſtronger light, when it is conſidered, that no creature either hath, or ever can acquire, any rights at all, or any demands upon his creator, unleſs by ſome promiſe or grant of grace he condeſcends to make himſelf debtor to them, and thus lays a proper foundation for their faith and hope. All that the moſt enlightened mere philoſopher has to build on, is what is called *the courſe of nature*, i. e. the order the creator has eſtabliſhed in his world; and a preſumption, as falſe as it is groundleſs, that things will continue to go on as they have done for the long courſe of time that is paſt. But even allowing the truth of the preſumption, there is nothing to be expected beyond a preſent life. Death puts an end to life; and that, for any thing he can know, makes an end of the man.

This puts me in mind of another neceſſary conſequence of creation, and the diſtinction the creator has made among the ſeveral ranks and orders of his creatures, viz. That he has with ſuch perfect

wiſdom adjuſted the conſtitution of every one of them to the ſtation and way of living which he has allotted them, that while they are perfectly pleaſed with their preſent gratifications, they have no taſte or reliſh for, nay they would be miſerable if they were confined to the way in which greatly more perfect creatures live. We need but look around us to find inſtances on every ſide. Whatever improvements and advances toward perfection, in their own ſphere, any of them are capable of making, (and ſome are capable of vaſtly great ones); or, on the contrary, into whatever baſeneſs, through negligence, ſloth, and contracted habits, any of them may ſink below their own ſpecies; yet can none of them ever transform themſelves into another ſpecies, or get over the bounds which the creator has ſet for keeping up the diſtinction. Thus a plant, with all the improvements that can be made, can never become an animal, nor a brute animal be improved into a man; and, I believe, no man was ever ſo extravagant as to imagine, that he could transform himſelf into an angel. The rant of ſome enthuſiaſtic philoſophers, that there needed no more

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to make them angels, but diveſting them of theſe bodies in which they ſuppoſed themſelves impriſoned, was either mere raving, or owing to a topic which no philoſopher, as ſuch, has any right to meddle with. Reaſon and revelation are very different.

But however limited every creature muſt be to its appointed ſtation, and way of living, it would be immenſely abſurd to imagine, that the creator himſelf is ſo limited, that he may not, if he pleaſes, take any ſpecies of creatures, even the loweſt and moſt worthleſs, or any individuals of the ſame ſpecies, and raiſe them to what degree of perfection and dignity he pleaſes, and that without the leaſt ſhadow of injuſtice either to any other ſpecies, or to any individuals of the ſame ſpecies, left in their creation-ſtate, or in that which they have choſen for themſelves. To clamour or complain on ſuch an occaſion, could not be more fooliſh, than it would have been, in the firſt creation, for beaſts to complain that they were not made men, or men that they were not made angels. Shall the creature ſay

to the creator, Why haſt thou made me thus? And ſurely as little reaſon could any have to ſay in ſuch a caſe, Why doſt thou not promote me to ſome higher ſtation? unleſs it had, what no creature ever had, or will have, ſome good reaſon to aſſign why he ſhould do ſo.

CHAP. III.

Man's Original State and Circumſtances.

HOwever uſeful and inſtructive the contemplation of the material univerſe may be, and that ſtupendous power which brought all things there into being, and eſtabliſhed them in that beautiful order, which will always be more and more admired, the better it comes to be known and underſtood; yet it is in the creator's ways with man that our more peculiar concerns lie. The heavens do indeed declare the glory of God, and the ſkies preach his handy-work; all his creatures praiſe him, and proclaim the ſtupendous wiſdom and power of their great creator; and, did we underſtand them well, we would

would find as ſtrong documents of his perfect goodneſs, an object worthy not only of all honour and adoration, but of the warmeſt gratitude and love: but in the unhappy circumſtances wherein all the children of Adam are found, the terrors of his majeſty rather damp and diſcourage, and thus mar, or rather deſtroy, the ſentiments we ought to entertain. His ways with man preſent him in a nearer and more intereſting light, and afford us the means of a fuller and more perfect knowledge of his true character. The record he has made of theſe ways completes a ſyſtem of perfect knowledge and wiſdom, which we never could have had by any other means whatſoever.

After the moſt circumſtantial account of the creation of the heavens and the earth, we meet with a full account of the creation of man, and the circumſtances in which he was then placed. And when we conſider the order in which that great work of creation was carried on; from the leſs to the more noble creatures; from dead matter to plants and trees, fiſhes, fowls, and terreſtrial animals; and how none of them were brought into being

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until proviſion was in all reſpects made for their comfortable ſubſiſtence; it gives at once a high notion of the creator's wiſdom and goodneſs, and of the excellency of man, the laſt, and therefore the finiſhing piece of the creation; which is juſtly increaſed by the peculiar ſolemnity with which it is introduced. "And God," the *Elohim*, "ſaid, Let us make man in our "image, after our likeneſs."

Great pains have been taken to explain away the natural and obvious ſenſe which every candid reader muſt have affixed to theſe words, viz. That there were at leaſt more than one concerned in the creation of man. For to whomſoever theſe words are ſuppoſed to be addreſſed, they muſt be ſuppoſed likewiſe to be creators, and conſequently divine agents, being thus included in that work which moſt effectually diſtinguiſhes God from the creature; and if that is communicated to creatures, there is nothing left to diſtinguiſh him from them, as there is no perfection or power that can be imagined ſuperior to what is diſplayed there. To ſay nothing of the palpable abſurdity in ſuppoſing a creature poſſeſſed of, and exerting, the ſame

ſame power which brought it into being, to ſpeak a world out of nothing, or even to make a man out of the duſt of the earth. This is the peculiar work of thoſe *Elohim*, who are JEHOVAH, the only proprietor of being; and who, we are well aſſured, will not give his glory to another, not even to the moſt dignified of the creatures he hath made.

It has been found a matter of ſome difficulty to adjuſt the proper import of theſe words, "Let us make man in our image, "after our likeneſs." It would be a piece of very ſuperfluous nicety to go about making a diſtinction between *image* and *likeneſs*. The words import no more than ſuch an image as ſhould bear ſome likeneſs to the original; and nothing can deſerve the name of an *image* but what does ſo. But beſides the likeneſs, the image muſt be a *deſigned* repreſentation: A prodigious honour this, and ſuch as we find no other creature dignified with. But the difficulty lies in finding wherein this ſimilitude and likeneſs conſiſt.

It has been reckoned abſurd by the generality of inquirers, to look for this in the human body; and would certainly be ſo, if

if one was to look no further. They have therefore pitched upon the ſoul, which, by reaſon of its ſpiritual nature, may be thought to bear a nearer reſemblance. And what the Apoſtle ſays of thoſe who believe in Chriſt, viz. that they are "renewed after the image of him that "created them, in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs," hath determined them to look for it in thoſe which are called the moral perfections of the ſoul. The Apoſtle's deſcription of the ſtate of thoſe who are renewed in Chriſt, is certainly a very juſt one; but it ſuppoſes they were men before they were thus renewed: and we find God himſelf declaring, that man was made in his image when the corruption was as great as now.

They ſeem to come nearer the truth, who, along with the moral, take in what they call the natural perfections and powers of the mind, which all together are ſuppoſed to conſtitute man a rational being. But, after all, we are told that this ſame image was made out of the duſt of the earth, and to finiſh it, had the breath of life breathed into it. It muſt therefore be the man, and not any part of him ſeparately

parately taken, who is this image; the ſoul and body united, and conſtituting one agent, endued with certain active powers which cannot be exerted but in this conjunction. The moſt refined and purely ſpiritual-like actions, are performed, not only in the body, but by the aſſiſtance of the corporeal organs; as appears very evidently in numberleſs obvious caſes, where the mind is diſabled in its moſt noble powers by the indiſpoſition of theſe organs, and their incapacity of performing their part.

It may merit conſideration, whether this compounded agent, in whom we find three diſtinct kinds of powers, and very like three diſtinct ſyſtems, united in ſo cloſe a manner that they never act ſeparately, viz. the *perceptive*, by which all our knowledge enters; by which I mean, not only the marvellous apparatus of the bodily ſenſes, but thoſe more wonderful organs by which we are fitted for taking in the information of ſuch things as never fell within the reach of our ſenſes; the *rational*, by which we are capable of improving the perceptions and informations we receive, to form our ſentiments

and affections into a courſe of wiſdom and virtue; and the *executive*, by which we exert ſuch power as we have for accompliſhing our purpoſes and intentions: it merits conſideration, I ſay, whether this compound agent is not the faireſt image and beſt repreſentation of the perfect knowledge, wiſdom, and power, of him that made him, and even of the union of three diſtinct agents in the one eſſence of JEHOVAH.

Theſe however, we are ſure, make out another further plan, on which the deſcriptive language is formed, by which the inviſible God repreſents himſelf and his ways to man, viz. his perfect knowledge and underſtanding, by our organs of perception, eyes, ears, &c.; his perfect wiſdom, by our ſcantling of wiſdom, and even by our ſentiments, affections, and paſſions; and his almighty power, by arms, hands, and even ſuch inſtruments as we commonly uſe, or were in uſe at the time when theſe things were ſpoken and written. And had he not condeſcended to do ſo, we could never have underſtood his meaning. Theſe therefore are no metaphors, but images,

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or models, which enable us, by a courſe of analogy quite natural to us, to form ſuch conceptions of what is infinitely above us as our preſent imperfection will admit of. I ſaid, by a courſe of analogy quite natural to us: for a very child, when it hears of any thing it has not ſeen, will aſk firſt, What it is? But when that cannot be ſatisfyingly anſwered, the next queſtion is, What it is like? or what doth it reſemble? And hence we ſee what attention is neceſſary, ſo to adjuſt the reſemblance, as that we may not be miſled to imagine, that the original is like the model, and that God is ſuch an one as ourſelves.

I have taken no notice of thoſe, who, for anſwering certain purpoſes, place the image and likeneſs of God in the dominion that was given man over the other creatures within his reach. For, beſides that this was a ſuperadded gift after man was made, this could not be an image or likeneſs of God, but of his ſovereign dominion over all things. And yet even from this, and, which is more, from the kingdoms and great empires of the world, and their meaſures of government, we find images

taken to expreſs the ſovereign dominion of God, and the righteous meaſures of his government.

There is ſomething in the mechaniſm of the human body ſo very curious, even in the partial view we can take of it, (and it would be much more ſo could we diſcover the ſecret ſprings by which the whole is managed), that ſhould raiſe in us the moſt affecting ſentiments: for indeed we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." But yet there is ſomething in the human conſtitution, namely, the ſoul of man, which, however infinitely ſhort of its maker, is in a manner as incomprehenſible, and of which we know nothing, but by the ſame means which lead us to the knowledge of him, viz. its actings and operations. Of theſe indeed we are inwardly and immediately conſcious, while, at the ſame time, we know nothing of the being or agent which produces them. Many fruitleſs attempts have been made to bring this impenetrable ſecret to light, and to fix the boundaries between matter and ſpirit: but all the gueſſes and refinements that have been made, leave us juſt where every plain man would have found himſelf without

without them; and terminate in this ſimple concluſion, That the firſt is dead, inert, and purely paſſive; the other, lively and active: A diſtinction which anſwers all our purpoſes with as much preciſion, and without any of the inconceivable perplexities, that philoſophical diſquiſitions are intangled with; and there every plain Chriſtian may ſafely reſt.

This active power is the ſame principle which conſtitutes what we call *life*; which, we obſerved before, is as great a myſtery as creation itſelf, and reſolves into the ſame energy of divine power. The different degrees diſtinguiſh the different kinds of it, as it is found in the different orders of living creatures which fall under our obſervation: and how many more there may be in the univerſe, who can take upon him to ſay? It would be a fruitleſs attempt to ſtate the preciſe difference: but it is ſo great, that were any of theſe creatures to paſs from one order to another, its former life muſt be ſuperſeded and put an end to, the ſame which we call *dying*. Men are apt to imagine, that advancing from a lower to a higher kind of life and activity, is only an improvement on the life which they had before,

fore. And it may be ſo, where there is no inconſiſtency between the old and new way of living. But the difference would be very ſenſible in a degradation, ſuch as a man being turned into a brute, or an animal into a tree or a ſtone; though there is nothing more real in the one change than in the other. We have a familiar inſtance in thoſe ſorts of worms which are produced by flies: A common thing, but very inſtructive, if well improved.

To arrive at juſt apprehenſions of our firſt father's paradiſiacal life, we muſt conſider with ſome attention every circumſtance we find recorded about it. After his body was formed, God breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life; and the effect of it was, that he became a living ſoul, or, more literally, a ſoul of lives. But it muſt be remembered, that the word which is here rendered *ſoul*, is always uſed to ſignify the body, and often the dead body, of a man, both by Moſes and the other writers in that language. But however the terms may lead us no further than that he was made a perfect animal, yet we are ſure, that there was a ſpirit given him of a higher nature, and which

which has been thought, juſtly enough, to be implied in the plural form of the word which we render *life*. The breathing into him, I need not obſerve, gave riſe to what has been called *inſpiration*, expreſſing that inconceivable action of the eternal Spirit by which underſtanding and every ſpiritual gift is conveyed to man.

This ſame inſpiration, though not confined to him alone, muſt notwithſtanding be allowed a ſingular favour. An utter ſtranger in the new world, without knowing how either he or it came there; experience or obſervation might to him have been a ſure, but evidently a very ſlow way of acquiring even the moſt neceſſary knowledge. His creator therefore condeſcended to be his teacher, and taught him in the only way in which a creature ſo ſituated could be taught. He gathered into the compaſs of one garden every creature he needed to know any thing about; and by putting him upon giving them names, taught him the uſe of thoſe words and that language in which he afterward converſed with him in a friendly and familiar manner; an invention ſo much above human ſkill, that it is not at all likely

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it would ever have been carried much beyond the exclamations which naturally ariſe on the ſenſations of pleaſure and pain, and ſuch affections and paſſions as we find very cloſely connected with them.

What particular inſtructions he then gave him, we are not directly told; but by the particular circumſtances which we have recorded, he was ſufficiently taught, that he who thus converſed with him had created all theſe things, and him among the reſt, and that creature-dependency which ſo naturally ariſes from that relation. Thus we find him acting, not ſo much as the man's ſuperior, his lord and maſter, but as the ſovereign proprietor of all: ſo that the man could not have any right or title to any thing, not ſo much as his neceſſary food, but by virtue of a grant from his creator; which we find he very formally made; but with a reſervation, which ſhould be a continual memorial to his creature, how he came by it, and of whom he held it. The dominion he gave him over the reſt of the creatures carried the ſame import. But the finiſhing evidence of all was, the creation of the woman, which yet, no doubt for wiſe

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reaſons, he was not permitted to be witneſs to. And thus we may ſay of him in every view, what the Apoſtle Paul ſays of himſelf, "that it was by the grace of God "he was what he was."

By the formation of Eve, and the bleſſing which followed upon it, we have brought into our view a power, which might be deemed rather greater that creation itſelf, if any thing could be ſo. That was effected indeed by a bare word: He ſpoke, and it was done by his immediate power. But here, by the word of the bleſſing, there was power eſtabliſhed in the creature to convey being and life to a numberleſs ſucceſſion of men. They were indeed but means and under-agents, through whom the divine power was to be exerted to ſuch a vaſt diſtance of time. Thus every man is as really, though not ſo immediately, the production of divine power, as the firſt man was.

By this bleſſing, Adam was ſet at the head of mankind; and all the life that ever was to be communicated to any of mankind, was ſo lodged in his hand, that it could not be conveyed but through him; and of this one blood all the fami-

lies of the earth were to be created. And as no life of any kind can ever riſe higher than its original creature-ſtate, unleſs by a new interpoſition of creating power, which, I obſerved, the creator might exert when and upon whom he pleaſed; it follows, that when this power is exerted, then, in the ſtricteſt propriety of ſpeech, and without any ſhadow of a metaphor, a new creature is produced into being. Adam's paradiſiacal ſtate has been regarded as the perfection of the human nature, and the fall regretted as an irreparable loſs to mankind. It was certainly the higheſt any child of Adam can aſpire to, when his ambition is indulged as far as it can carry his wiſhes. Adam indeed had every thing that could make ſuch a creature happy; all that the earth could afford agreeable, laid to his hand; perfect innocence unallayed by any thing that could mar his inward peace; and the friendſhip of his maker every day aſcertained by freſh inſtances.

But with all the advantages he enjoyed, many and great as they were; yet, were it poſſible for any of his poſterity to be reſtored to the ſame ſituation, he would find himſelf greatly ſhort of that perfect happineſs which he expected to find there;

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as will appear very plainly from the circumſtances in which Adam was placed. I mention only ſome of the moſt obvious, which yet will fully ſatisfy us, that his condition was not ſuch as a wiſe man who knows any thing of Jeſus Chriſt would wiſh to be found in.

What I chuſe firſt to take notice of, is the higheſt part of his happineſs, the communion and intercourſes of friendſhip with his creator, which were all managed in a ſenſible manner; I mean, as men converſe with one another. This ſome may reckon a ſingular advantage, and a very high privilege, much to be wiſhed for in our preſent ſtate of diſtance from God. But we muſt find ourſelves obliged to think otherwiſe, when we reflect, that he neither had, nor could have, in that way, any views of the glory of God, but ſuch as were vailed and darkened by ſenſible appearances, infinitely ſhort of what the Apoſtle calls *ſeeing face to face*, and *knowing him even as we are known*, and even of that which now ſhines in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, which every Chriſtian has free acceſs to. He was made for living in the ſtate he was placed in,

and for poſſeſſing all the happineſs a man can enjoy in a preſent world. But it does not appear he was made for any higher ſtation, or more perfect way of living; and we have no intimation of any reaſon he had to hope for it.

It has been, I know not how, in a manner taken for granted, that after continuing for ſome time under probation, (how long, none have pretended to ſay, but ſome time or other), he ſhould have been tranſplanted into a ſtate much like that, if not the very ſame, which believers in Chriſt have the well-founded proſpect of. We may ſurely ſay, that all this is mere gueſſing, as there is not the leaſt ſhadow of any promiſe or grant of life, much leſs of ſuch a life, found in the record. He needed no grant of the life he was in poſſeſſion of. But even that he had no promiſe of being continued to him, except what was implied in the terms on which he held it. But in the denunciation ſolemnly made to him, That in the day he ſhould eat of the fruit he ſhould be ſubjected to death, there ſeems to be a plain enough intimation, that his preſent happineſs was not to be perpetual;

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as we are ſure, by the event, it was never deſigned it ſhould be.

The very poſſibility of this, and the danger he muſt have found himſelf in, of ſuch (as muſt have appeared to him) an irreparable loſs, at the ſame time that it ſhould have put him ſtrongly upon his guard, muſt have been a great drawback upon his preſent enjoyments, however great they may be ſuppoſed to have been. The proſpect was dreadful. His creator gave him no ſecurity againſt it, as he could eaſily have done, but left it altogether in his own hand; and he could never be without ſome degree of fear, that either he, or ſome of his, might incur the awful forfeiture.

This danger was greatly increaſed by the natural imperfection of his conſtitution. With all the advantages he enjoyed, he was ſo cloſely connected with the creature, and in ſuch dependence on material objects, both for the ſupports and enjoyments of life, that they ſtood as it were between God and him, and every thing almoſt he had from him came by them. This could have been no loſs to him ſo long as theſe were kept in their proper place,

place, as the creatures of God, and abſolutely in his hand: for thus they led him directly to the creator, and ſhould have terminated all his acknowledgements there. But ſtill there was danger, and the event ſhewed it to have been very great, that they might intercept that regard and attention which was due only to him, whoſe bleſſing alone, that is, his power put forth by them, could make them good for any thing.

But nothing can more convincingly illuſtrate the imperfection and weakneſs of that ſtate, than the event and iſſue of it. We cannot ſay preciſely how ſoon, but very ſoon an end was put to all the perfection and happineſs the man was put in poſſeſſion of at his creation, and the paradiſiacal ſtate together: A ſure evidence, that the creator never deſigned it to be the permanent ſtate of mankind, but an introduction to that which he had determined to be ſo, and which has taken place ever ſince our firſt father was driven out of paradiſe. But we have a ſtronger one. We are ſure there was another ſort of life, and another way too of living upon God, deſigned in his eternal counſels. Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt was ſet up from everlaſting as the only mediator between God and man, through whom alone all his favours are conveyed to them, and another ſort of ſtation was deſigned in the eternal world, as much more excellent than paradiſe, as heaven is above the earth, and God better than the creature; whereof the paradiſiacal ſtate was only a faint ſhadow.

This leads us to one good reaſon for introducing what has been ever ſince the ſtate of mankind in that manner. Hereby we are provided in ſomething of a model or ſhadowy repreſentation of the happineſs of the unſeen, ſpritual, and eternal world, and the way of living there, ſo different from what we are accuſtomed to in this our low ſtate, viz. living on the fulneſs and all-ſufficiency of him who furniſhed out all the beauty and excellency of paradiſe, the height of all earthly happineſs. And thence we find the deſcriptive language taken, by which that glorious and happy ſtate is painted out to us, and upon which, with proper allowances for the immenſe odds between the earthly and heavenly paradiſe, we are directed to form our conceptions and apprehenſions

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of that otherwiſe inconceivable happineſs and glory.

There was likewiſe another great and gracious end anſwered by this way of introducing the preſent ſtate of mankind; a piece of inſtruction very neceſſary, but which we are very loath to receive; viz. That life can never be ſafely lodged in the hands of the moſt perfect mere man. A more advantageous ſituation can hardly be imagined than Adam was placed in. He had all the gratifications and materials of pleaſure the world could afford, greatly above what the moſt finiſhed epicure could ever have imagined, and was bleſſed at the ſame time with a perfect friend, and the moſt exalted friendſhip. His conſtitution ſo good, and his conſcience ſo clear by his perfect innocence, that nothing could mar the moſt perfect enjoyment of all. He was made for his ſtation, and his ſtation for him, upon the meaſures of perfect wiſdom. It was not by doing ſome great or difficult thing that he held his poſſeſſions, or indeed by doing any thing at all. He had no ſuch law given him, as was afterward, when ſin had entered; no duties, either of religion or morality injoined

ed him. He needed none, for he was a law to himſelf. He needed only follow the dictates and inclinations of his own perfect conſtitution, which would naturally determine him to all thoſe offices of love to his great friend and benefactor, which would of courſe have brought all other duties along with it. All that was required of him was a very ſmall piece of forbearance, not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree which was pointed out to him. So that one might have thought he was ſet beyond the reach of every temptation. And ſure eaſier terms could not be deviſed in his circumſtances. But the temptation was admitted. He forfeited life by his tranſgreſſion: and how fooliſh muſt it be in any of his poſterity to imagine that life would be ſafer in their hands?

But the Apoſtle gives us yet a further and higher view of the creator's wiſdom in this way of entering mankind into their preſent ſtate. The firſt Adam was the figure, type, or repreſentation of him who was to come, in whom all the hopes and all the happineſs of mankind are centered, in whom all the counſels of God

were laid, and by whom they are performed and carried into execution, even Jeſus Chriſt, the deſigned head of mankind, in relation to the ſpiritual and eternal world, as the firſt Adam was in relation to this: and there is hardly any one among the many types and figures we have given us of him more inſtructive, and which gives a more perfect view of him, as we find the Apoſtle improving it in his epiſtles to the Romans and Corinthians; which I will have occaſion to conſider more particularly when I come to ſpeak of this glorious perſon. I only obſerve at preſent, that the firſt Adam ſtood at the head of mankind in the firſt creation, and repreſented all his poſterity; that he received life both for himſelf and them from the creator's hand; that he was conſtituted the only channel of conveyance by which they could come to the poſſeſſion of life, or any of the powers belonging to it; that accordingly he received the terms directly from his maker's hand on which it was to be held; and in the iſſue he failed in the performance, and thereby ſubjected himſelf and all his poſterity to inevitable death, which he

he tranſmitted to them along with that life which he conveyed.

CHAP. IV.

The nature of the Curſe, and the condition of man by the Fall, ſtated.

THIS remarkable event, which I do not think deſerves the epithet of an unhappy one, for ſuch of mankind as improve it, has occaſioned a great variety of curious ſpeculations, and plans of the divine government, for juſtifying the creator's proceedings in the meaſures which he has taken for mankind, which I apprehend the plain Chriſtian needs give himſelf very little trouble about, as all of them, more or leſs directly, are founded upon a propoſition (to which I will not give the name that I think it deſerves), viz. That ſo ſoon as the noble rational creature was brought into being, God put off the character of creator, and aſſumed that of a righteous moral governor, by which he bound himſelf to proceed with him in the preciſe terms of

rectoral juſtice; that is, by ſuch meaſures as the kings of this earth are bound to obſerve toward their ſubjects, who are poſſeſſed of rights and property as well as the ſovereign, and which he has no right to meddle with; but, on the contrary, ſtands bound by his place to be the guardian of. And thus the ſovereign proprietor of all things in heaven and earth muſt be degraded into the rank of an earthly king, and that not an abſolute, but a limited monarch, to favour the inſolent pretenſions of a ſet of precarious beings, who have neither right nor property, not ſo much as in their own life and being, but what he is pleaſed in mere ſovereign grace to confer. And yet could a king be found among men perfectly wiſe, good, and powerful, it would unqueſtionably be the intereſt of his ſubjects to have him veſted with the moſt abſolute and uncontrollable powers.

The different plans which the aſſertors of this form of divine government have laid down for the meaſure of the divine procedure, will be found to terminate much in the ſame iſſue. Many have thought, that they might be beſt account-

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ed for on the plan of a covenant or covenants, as occaſion required, concerted on certain terms and conditions to be performed by either party. The baſis of the whole they make that which they ſuppoſe to have been made with the firſt man on condition of perfect obedience, and all after meaſures founded in and directed by it. Others reckoning this ſort of condeſcenſion below the majeſty of the ſovereign, will have him to manage all as a righteous lawgiver, who preſcribes rules of duty to his ſubjects, and is to reward or puniſh them as they obſerve or neglect his commandments; and thus reduce Chriſtianity to a mere ſyſtem of laws, and ſuſpend the eternal ſtate of mankind upon their good or bad behaviour, who muſt expect to be rewarded or puniſhed according to the meaſures of juſtice, with ſuch mixtures of mercy, or abatements of juſtice, as the caſe of the ſubject ſhall need.

The dangerous tendency of this laſt-mentioned ſcheme, the promoters of the covenant-plan greatly avail themſelves of. But the moſt plauſible ground, and what they found mainly upon, is, the word in the Old-Teſtament language, by which God

God hath chosen to express his instrument of government, and which our translators always render *covenant*. The word signifies generally all kinds of deeds, whereby rights of any sort are conferred, and is very frequently used for covenants or mutual agreements between man and man. This might have been reckoned decisive, if the New-Testament writers had not cleared up the difference. Where the Hebrews had but one word for all kind of deeds, the Greeks have two, συνθηκη, and διαθηκη. The first, as the word plainly imports, is used to signify covenants or mutual agreements, wherein two or more are engaged; the other is never used but to denote the deed of one, a constitution or established order, a grant, or deed of gift; and particularly a *testament*, by which inheritances or legacies are conveyed. And whosoever will with any care and attention consider what in our translation are called *God's covenants*, will find them all of this latter kind, either authoritative constitutions, which those to whom they were given were obliged to submit to, or grants and deeds of gift in their favour, which went always together, and constituted at once

once the rule of judgement for the ſovereign, and of duty for the ſubject.

I obſerved before, that Adam, in his primitive ſtate, had no grant of life; but he was put in poſſeſſion of it, and had by ſpecial grant dominion given him over all God's other creatures within his reach: and upon this was founded the commandment, and the puniſhment in caſe of tranſgreſſion. This was the ſole conſtitution, and enough for that ſhort period; and we ſee by the ſequel how it was the rule on which judgement proceeded.

And here it may be proper to obſerve, once for all, that the laws of God, or ſuch conſtitutions of any kind as he has ſeen fit to eſtabliſh, are not like thoſe of weak fallible men, who cannot foreſee the different events and caſes that may fall out, and therefore need often to be mitigated, diſpenſed with, and even abrogated, as the unforeſeen alteration of circumſtances may require. All his orders are concerted on perfect wiſdom and foreknowledge of all events that can poſſibly happen; and therefore can never be diſpenſed with in any caſe, but muſt be fulfilled in every point: and where the meaning

meaning is clearly expreſſed, he muſt be a bold man who dare venture to explain it into a conſiſtency with any plan, however plauſible, he may have laid down.

In order therefore to attain any thing like proper conceptions of the great change which was made in the circumſtances of mankind by our firſt father's tranſgreſſion, we muſt, in the firſt place, be ſure of the right import and meaning of that denunciation which produced it, and particularly of that death which he certainly muſt fall under upon his eating the forbidden fruit. Many have carried this ſo far, as to extend it even to that which has been ſince called *eternal death*, the puniſhment we find denounced againſt the deſpiſers or neglecters of Jeſus Chriſt and his great ſalvation; therefore called *eternal*, becauſe there remains no poſſibility of relief. Others ſtop as much ſhort, confining it entirely to the death of the body, and reducing it to duſt. There are only two ways on which we can certainly determine this important queſtion, viz. the judgement given upon the delinquents by the judge, who was the framer of the law, and therefore underſtood it perfectly; and

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our own experience of what we either do, or may feel, in ourſelves, in this our preſent ſtate, which was fixed and determined by that judgement. There has been a third way attempted, and much inſiſted on; namely, reaſoning upon the circumſtances of the caſe, and the conſequences which ſeem naturally to ariſe out of them. So far as theſe are found agreeable to, and ſupported by the other two, we may conclude them juſt; otherwiſe no great dependence can be had on them, however they may appear to our apprehenſions of things, which are at beſt but a bad rule to judge by.

As death is allowed by all to import an end put to life, and as the denunciation was peremptory, "In the day thou eateſt thou "ſhalt ſurely die;" *thou*, and not another, we muſt conclude, that it could import no leſs than the loſs of all that life he was then in poſſeſſion of, which we may call the paradiſiacal life, and no further. It ſeems therefore incumbent on thoſe who extend it to eternal death, to make it appear, that Adam in paradiſe was poſſeſſed of that kind of life which is called *eternal*, the life which is in Chriſt

Jeſus; which I believe no body will ſay. They build much on the nature and demerit of ſin: and I would not willingly ſay any thing that might be conſtructed into the leaſt tendency toward extenuating the nature of that horrible evil; but by the iſſue of this firſt diſpenſation, and ſeveral other inſtances in the record, we muſt conclude, that it belongs to the great ſovereign to affix what penalty he pleaſes to his laws. The concluſions drawn from the nature of vindictive juſtice, are rather too bold for man to make, without better authority, than the record gives us. But there is one inſuperable prejudice that attends this ſuppoſition, That had eternal death been the penalty, Adam himſelf at leaſt muſt have died eternally; and if the denunciation given upon the tranſgreſſion extends to all his poſterity, as appears by the event it did, not one of them could have been ſaved, without diſpenſing with the unalterable divine conſtitution, or ſome how changing the tenor of it: An abſurdity which can never be admitted on any conſideration whatſoever. That original life muſt be deſtroyed; nor can the original law be ſatisfied by any means whatſoever

whatſoever until that is done: but when it is done, and that law thereby fulfilled, there is nothing to hinder the creator to raiſe whom he pleaſes to eternal life.

There is no room for diſputing what is called the natural death: but it appears by the judgement given upon the tranſgreſſors, that the denunciation is not to be underſtood in that preciſe ſenſe which our tranſlation gives to it, "That in the "day they ſhould eat they ſhould ſurely "die;" neither do the original words neceſſarily infer that conſtruction. Literally rendered, they run thus: "In dying thou "ſhalt die." It is enough to ſupport the truth of the denunciation, that from that day they ſhould be brought under the power of death, which the painful labour they were condemned to very naturally iſſues in. But even in the ſenſe our tranſlation gives, the threatening may be found punctually fulfilled: For in that very day there was a final end put to man's paradiſiacal life; he was driven out from that happy dwelling; and the pittance of life that was left him was ſupported in ſuch a manner, and by ſuch different means, that the degradation, e-

ven in that view, muſt have been more than a metaphorical death, when compared with the life which he formerly enjoyed.

This was indeed a very ſenſible and affecting loſs which our firſt parents ſuſtained by their tranſgreſſion, but not the only death which they fell under on that day. When we reflect on the nature of the crime, and the temptation which induced them to commit it, as bad as the neglect of their creator's authority was, there will appear ſomething in it greatly worſe. Their forbearance of that fruit was made the condition on which they held their lives. But it was made ſo for a higher end than a bare trial of their loyalty to their ſovereign: It was deſigned to maintain a dutiful ſenſe of their dependence on their creator, and that it was purely by his grace and ſupporting power that they could live. The crime could not be committed, as indeed no ſin can, but upon a latent perſuaſion, that there is more to be made by the creature than they had to expect from the creator. On this the temptation was founded, "Ye ſhall be as "gods, to know good and evil;" and thus

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ſhould not need any longer to be obliged to him; and that he knew this very well, and had forbidden it merely to keep them in dependence. Thus they were drawn to forſake the only way in which they could live, and to take up with another, whereby it was impoſſible they could. And having thus deſerted, and being thereby cut off from the fountain of life, they muſt have periſhed infallibly, if there had not been a new way opened for their relief.

This directs us into a further, and yet more dreadful, though not ſo ſenſible, view of that death the firſt offenders were ſubjected to, as they were certainly poſſeſſed of a greatly higher kind of life than that of a mere animal. Man was made indeed to take in all the pleaſure the whole creation could give in its higheſt bloom of perfection: but he was made alſo for gratifications infinitely preferable, in the intercourſes of friendſhip which ſubſiſted between his creator and him. We need no more to prove a peculiar kind of life ſuited to this happy ſituation, than that he had a ſpirit in his conſtitution, as well as a body. And created ſpi-

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rits can no more ſubſiſt without the continued influences of the divine Spirit, than animals can do without air, and the influences of the ſun exerted and directed by it. It is by this Spirit that the divine power, which upholds all things, the material world by means, and the ſpiritual directly and immediately, is exerted and put forth. When this Spirit is taken away, the communication between God and the creature is ſo far broken off, that the man can no longer live as ſpirits do; it is the very death of the ſpirit, and what effectually puts an end to the ſpiritual life. But it will not follow, that the ſpirit muſt periſh, or be reduced to its primitive nothing. Annihilation and death are two very different things. When the ſoul leaves the body, and its connection with the material ſyſtem is broken off, the man is dead, though the body continues juſt as it was before; and even when it is diſſolved into duſt, there is not one atom annihilated. Muſt it not be then reckoned ſufficient to denominate a ſpirit dead, when its connection with the ſpiritual ſyſtem is ſo far broken off, that it can no longer live as ſpirits do, but is degraded

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and ſunk into a mere implement for exalting the animal life in man, above the ſame kind of life in his fellow-brutes, a mere ſlave and purveyor for the appetites and luſts of his ſenſual part.

It were much for the intereſt of men, in this world, as well as in the next, that this was not ſo completely verified as it is by the experience of mankind, and by what is to be found in every child of Adam. We have it ſtrongly atteſted in the divine record, where we have them all declared naturally to be ſuch thorough atheiſts, or ſo without God in the world, that they neither receive, nor can ſo much as know the things of God, for want of that ſpiritual diſcerning, which is the firſt and moſt natural exertion of ſpiritual life, and on which all the other actings of that kind of life are founded. But though we had no ſuch teſtimony, we needed not go ſo far back as the way by which we come into the world, and the total ignorance which infancy and the firſt period of life are involved in, to be fully convinced of this ſad truth, That all men are born atheiſts; and that the far greateſt part, after all the pains and inſtruction they will admit of, are but very very little better. We need only

only look in to ourſelves, and make a ſerious effort to rouſe our ſpiritual powers, and try fairly what we can make of God, and of all the wonders of the unſeen ſpiritual world; and the leaſt we can conclude muſt be, that we are in a ſtate of abſolute baniſhment from it, and cut off from all correſpondence with it; made for nothing but a preſent world, and incapable of living upon any thing but the things of a preſent world; and the only uſe we put our ſouls to is, to make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof.

It cannot be thought, however, that the firſt delinquents, who had been taught and had ſeen ſo much of God, could ever ſink into a ſtate of ſuch brutal ignorance; eſpecially when, with all the diſadvantages our rational and perceptive powers are loaded with, we retain ſtill a very marvellous power, or what would be reckoned ſuch, was it not ſo common, that we can take in informations of ſuch things as we never ſaw, and make our advantage of them much in the ſame manner as if we had ſeen them ourſelves. By virtue of this wonderful talent, the experimental knowledge our firſt parents had acquired might be, as we know by the record it certainly

certainly was, handed down to their poſterity: and even to this day we know what great meaſures of hearſay knowledge may be acquired, even of ſpiritual and eternal things, by the informations we have in our hands; and which ought to produce the ſame effect in us which their experimental knowledge did in them.

Their behaviour is very inſtructive; and though very ſhortly, yet is very naturally deſcribed. The firſt thing we have obſerved about them is, that the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. As nakedneſs is often uſed in the record to expreſs the unhappy ſtate of a ſoul forſaken of God, it might be reaſonably enough conſtructed in this ſenſe, were it not for the way they took for relief againſt the painful ſenſe of it, which determines it to bodily nakedneſs. But that does not lead us to imagine, as ſome have done, that they were formerly in ſuch a ſtate of childiſh ſimplicity, that they could not diſtinguiſh between a naked and a cloathed body. The opening of their eyes argues no more, but that they were ſo ſhut during the working of the temptation, that they did

not mind what they were doing; until, upon a reflection on their guilt, fear and ſhame, its inſeparable companions, ſeized them at once: unleſs we ſhould think as ſome, not without good appearance of reaſon, have done, that during their innocence, and frequent converſe with their maker, their whole bodies were cloathed with ſuch a light as ſhone in the face of Moſes when he came down from converſing with God on Sinai.

But however that is, their remorſe appears to have been very ſtrong. And it could not be otherwiſe, when they came to reflect on what they had loſt, and how ſhamefully it was loſt, for a trifle, a thing of nothing! and eſpecially when what they had to expect was taken into the account. They durſt not think of the creator; and the creature, which was now their only reſource, could provide them no better than with a few leaves to cover their nakedneſs, and a thicket to hide them from the all-ſeeing eye of their creator: A ſure ſign, that with all the knowledge they had of the creator, their notions of him were not very ſublime. And thus, as their only care appears to have been,

been, to keep out of God's ſight, if he had not condeſcended to look after them, they had never ventured to ſeek after him.

We need not inſiſt any further on the judgement given in this occaſion, by which the ſtate of mankind was fixed exactly as we now find it. The ground was curſed, that it ſhould not yield its ſtrength, even upon the moſt laborious tillage; in the ſweat of their face they were to eat their bread; thorns and thiſtles ſprung ſpontaneouſly out of the earth; and in the end man returns to the duſt from which he was taken.

There is a peculiar unhappineſs attends this ſtation, where man has nothing left him to live upon but what he can pick up in a preſent world, and is ſhut out from all correſpondence with his creator. Thence his ſentiments come all to be formed upon the preſent ſtate of things; and the rational powers, which ſhould have balanced the heart with thoſe things which are not ſeen, have loſt their influence; and, upon the whole, ſuch ſtrong and inveterate habits are contracted, that perfect wiſdom has declared it as impoſſible for him to learn to do well, as it is for the Ethiopian

to change his ſkin, and the leopard his ſpots. The love of a preſent life, and a preſent world, is the ruling principle in the heart; and where that is the caſe, we are well inſtructed to ſay, the love of God can have no place; and the poor creature can do nothing, but, dead as he is to God, bring forth a continued courſe of dead works, as the apoſtle very emphatically and juſtly calls all that is done by man, until the Spirit of life in Chriſt recovers him into life, and plants the love of God in the heart.

Thus the man naturally goes on, with a mind ſo blinded by the god of this world, that even the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, ſhining round about him, can have no acceſs there: the courſe of the world, and the example of thoſe about him, harden him more and more, until the wrath of God, revealed from heaven, againſt all unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of men, gives the alarm. Guilt points it directly at him: and what ſhould have driven him to his creator, where only relief can be had, viz. an evil conſcience, or a conſciouſneſs of guilt, preſents him in all the terrors of an enemy, and inflames

flames the heart to treat him as ſuch. It firſt repreſents him as one who will not be pleaſed with the creature till he renounce all that is agreeable to his perverted taſte; and then ſo pure, ſo holy, and ſo juſt, that it can never be imagined he will regard ſuch a wretch as the poor ſinner muſt find himſelf to be. Hence the heart comes to be filled with ſuch fears, jealouſies, and evil ſurmiſings, as foſter a ſecret enmity, ſo ſtrong, that it is the hardeſt thing in the world to reconcile a ſinner's heart to God, and make him pleaſed with him as he is. This enmity indeed dare not vent itſelf directly, but vents itſelf ſufficiently in ſecret wiſhes, that God were not ſo pure, ſo holy, and ſo irreconcileable to ſin. It is this unhappy ſpirit that has produced ſo many attempts by thoſe they call *learned men*, to reconcile the love of God and the love of the world; and to contrive ſuch ideas, as they call them, of God, as may be reconciled to the luſts and paſſions of men; that is, ſuch a god as they want, and could be pleaſed with.

This apparently unhappy condition, which mankind have been reduced to on occaſion of their firſt father's tranſgreſſion, has

has opened the mouths of a certain ſet of men, who would be thought greatly wiſer than their neighbours, to utter the moſt outrageous clamours againſt the juſtice and equity of this way of proceeding; which they magiſterially pronounce ſo unworthy of God, that rather than believe it, they will chuſe to believe that God has never ſpoken to mankind at all, but left them to live and die in this deplorable condition without any remedy. For that men actually are found in this condition cannot be diſputed. It muſt therefore be found conſiſtent with all the divine perfections, that man ſhould be born into, and live in a preſent world as we ſee he does: and when that is the caſe, one would think it a matter of no great moment, how or in what manner he was brought into it. Had it pleaſed the creator to have entered man into this way of living, without having ever heard of any better ſtate any man was ever in; nay, had he made them mere rational animals, to live and die as other animals do; who durſt have ſaid any thing againſt it? what ground then can any man have to complain, that he took a

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method ſo inſtructive, and ſo full of goodneſs, as that was, to introduce it by?

But after all, this is only a part, and the dark ſide too, of the ſtate which mankind were brought into by the loſs of the paradiſiacal life. Mankind was not left a day in that melancholy ſituation in which our firſt parents found themſelves upon their tranſgreſſion. Their gracious creator ſought them out, and, to their apprehenſion, brought them into judgement. But judgement was given in ſuch terms as perfectly relieved their fears of preſent death. And though it greatly abated their earthly happineſs, it opened a proſpect infinitely more advantageous, in the promiſe of a ſeed by the woman, who was firſt in the tranſgreſſion, which ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head; that is, as the Apoſtle John explains it, "ſhould deſtroy the works of "the devil," ſin and death. And as we certainly know, that he was the old ſerpent who deceived Eve in that form, in the curſe, denounced as it is in emblematical terms adapted to the ſtate of that noxious reptile, we have a very ſtrong deſcription of the baſeneſs of his nature, his way of living, and the work he was condemned to.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Sketch of Diſpenſations from the Fall to the coming of Chriſt; with a general view of the character of Chriſt.

FRom the account we have of the manner in which man was driven out of paradiſe, it appears rather to have been a work of mercy than of judgement. The ſpeech it is introduced with, "Behold, the "man is become as one of us," has more the air of compaſſion, than of irony, as ſome have conſtructed it. And if the following words are juſtly rendered, it was an act of real kindneſs; that the man might not fall again into the like ſnare, and run into a new inſtance of rebellion, by attempting to eat of the tree of life, that he might evade the ſentence appointing him, to return to the duſt from which he was taken. For ſecuring againſt ſuch a pernicious event, a guard of angels was ſet, to keep him out.

But indeed the original words of Moſes will, without any violence done them, admit

admit of a very different conſtruction. It is well known, that the tree of life, from the beginning to the end of the record, is made uſe of to ſignify what the tree which bore that name in paradiſe was but a figure or emblem of, viz. the great means which God hath choſen to convey eternal life to dead ſinners of mankind. It is obſerved by thoſe ſkilled in the language, that the particle which we render *left*, and which gives the turn to the whole ſentence, may be as properly rendered, ſo as to put man in a poſſibility of recovering life, as was done by the intimation already made in the ſerpent's curſe. And what follows, of ſetting up the cherubims on the eaſt of the garden, ſeems, all things conſidered, to determine their intention to be, not to keep men from, but to guide them into, the way of the tree of life. This will appear more than probable, when we reflect on the purpoſe which the cherubims anſwered in the tabernacle and temple: They were appendages of the mercy-ſeat, and Jehovah inhabited them, or dwelt between them. It was, without all queſtion, an emblematical exhibition of the God of grace dwelling among that people for whom Moſes

wrote, who, for any thing appears, had no other notion of cherubim. And when they were told of God's having placed them on the eaſt of Eden, they could not help concluding, that he pitched on that as the place in which he choſe to manifeſt himſelf, and where the worſhippers were to make their approaches to him: which is yet further confirmed by this, that we find the face, or faces, of Jehovah, mentioned as ſome place from whence Cain was, or at leaſt was afraid of being driven out. What is added, of a flaming ſword, in our tranſlation, is only fire, and another word which ſignifies any weapon of ſlaughter; which may poſſibly be a ſhort hint of the inſtitution of ſacrifice to be offered there. And I believe, upon the whole, it will be found very nearly to reſemble the prophet Ezekiel's fire infolding itſelf, in his viſion of the glory of God in the cherubim, rather than a flaming ſword turning every way at one part of the garden, while all the reſt was left open.

But however that is, it cannot be thought that they had no fuller information than the ſhort hints we find in the record. The people for whom Moſes wrote, needed no more;

more; as they were very fully inſtructed in all the matters of acceptable worſhip in the law, by the ſtatutes and judgements which were given them. We have not ſo much as any expreſs mention of any appointment of that very extraordinary piece of worſhip, viz. the offering ſacrifices, which yet could never have entered any other way, and carries its divine authority in its very appearance. For who could ever have imagined, that the ſhedding a beaſt's blood, and burning its fleſh with fire, could be pleaſing to the great ſovereign and proprietor of heaven and earth? Yet we know it was practiſed by wiſe and good men in the earlieſt ages; who would never have affronted the God they worſhipped with ſuch an abſurd ſort of ſervice, if they had not had his order, and ſeen further into the deſign of it, than the later philoſophers did, who ridiculed, and made it their buſineſs to expoſe it. Abel ſacrificed, and his ſacrifice was accepted; ſo did Noah, Abraham, and others on record; and no doubt many more, who are not mentioned there. Nay, and we have good reaſon to carry it higher; as we find God himſelf making a covering for our firſt pa-

rents of the ſkins of beaſts, which muſt have been killed, and could be killed for no other purpoſe than ſacrifice, as the fleſh of animals was no part of their food in that period.

We who know, that from the time we have any accounts of covenants and agreements among men, they entered into them by ſacrifice, and how this was the way which God himſelf took when he entered into what is called a covenant with the Iſraelitiſh nation, are very naturally led to think, that the ſame meaſure was taken at the promulgation of the conſtitution of grace, and that grant of eternal life which was then made to mankind in the ſeed of the woman. That there was ſuch a grant then intimated to them, can admit of no doubt; becauſe it was the only tenor by which they could hold their lives, and the only foundation they had to build their faith and their hope on. There was no difficulty in underſtanding the import of a promiſe: but they muſt have needed a great deal of inſtruction to make them underſtand the nature and uſe of a ſacrifice; which indeed it is hardly poſſible to make good ſenſe of, but as it ſtood in connection with the promiſed

miſed ſeed, the great and complete ſacrifice which God had in his perfect wiſdom deſigned for putting away ſin, ſo as it ſhould be remembered no more, and to give mankind the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, not only of pardon, but of the fulfilment of every tittle contained in the grant, in the fulleſt and moſt perfect manner, which we ſhall find occaſion to conſider more particularly afterward. This was ſo eſſential, that we find the Apoſtle declaring poſitively, "that without ſhed-"ding of blood there was no remiſſion." And thence it is very likely, that the grant or covenant ratified by the ſacrifice, and the ſacrifice itſelf, came to be called by the ſame name; and the making of a covenant or deed in one's favour was expreſſed by cutting off a BERITH.

It was upon this ſeed then that the grant of eternal life, and all the promiſes ſubſervient to it, were founded. We hear nothing further about it, but what is implied in what we are told of a time when men began to *call upon*, ſay our tranſlators; but the original and context determine the ſenſe, that they began to *be called by*, the name of JEHOVAH. For we read

read there of a diviſion among mankind; thoſe who adhered to the inſtituted worſhip, and thoſe who forſook it; the ſons of God joining in marriage with the daughters of men; upon which ſuch wickedneſs enſued, as occaſioned the deſtruction of the whole human race, excepting only eight perſons ſaved in the ark by ſpecial divine grace. Noah found grace in the eyes of JEHOVAH.

Noah was no ſooner come out of the ark, than we find him building an altar, and offering ſacrifices of every clean beaſt and fowl: A ſure evidence that he had been accuſtomed to it before; and that even the diſtinction between clean and unclean beaſts was known long before Moſes, and even before the flood; a diſtinction which no man had authority to make among God's creatures. God, we are told, ſmelled a ſweet ſavour, or a ſavour of reſt: A phraſe which we find often repeated in the law of Moſes on ſuch occaſions. What ſhall we ſay of this? ſhall we believe that the ſmell of burnt fleſh was ſo pleaſant to the Moſt High? No, ſurely. But what was repreſented by it, and the faith of the worſhipper in the promiſed ſeed, were ſo.

Accordingly

Accordingly he was bleſſed; the original bleſſing was renewed to him, and blood ſet apart to make an atonement for the lives of men.

In the covenant which God then declared he had made with all fleſh, to ſecure them againſt ſuch an univerſally deſtructive deluge, we have an inſtance, and a ſtrong confirmation, of what I obſerved of what is called God's covenant; that it does by no means imply any agreement of parties, but is his own ſingle deed, an authoritative conſtitution or grant which the creature is bound to believe and acquieſce in, which we find ſtrongly and properly expreſſed by laying hold on his covenant, or entering into it, preciſely as he has laid it. This ſame conſtitution we are directed to as a model of the covenant or conſtitution of grace, by the rainbow about the throne, repreſented in viſion to the Apoſtle John in his Revelations.

It would ſeem, that by the time Abraham was called, the apoſtaſy had again become very general. The promiſe of the ſeed, which had been until that time left at large, was renewed to him, and limited to his family, in a very remarkable manner.

manner. The bleſſing or promiſe of eternal life, and the promiſed ſeed, had always gone together from the beginning. Whenever the ſeed ſhould come, it was taken for granted, that the bleſſing was to come along with him. But the time of his coming was at a great diſtance. To ſupport therefore the faith of his people, and to give proof of his faithfulneſs, he condeſcended to give Abraham two intermediate grants; firſt, of a ſon; and, ſecondly, of the land of Canaan to his ſeed; both of them delayed ſo long, and himſelf and his wife firſt, and afterwards his ſeed, reduced to ſuch circumſtances, that nothing but almighty power could make them effectual. But by that power they were made effectual, and the faithfulneſs of God in making good his promiſes, ſo firmly eſtabliſhed, that no doubt could be made of what was yet behind. And here again we have another palpable inſtance of God's covenant being a deed and conſtitution of his own, without any parties or mutual agreements.

The memory of this promiſed ſeed was kept up in the Iſraelitiſh nation, from the time eſpecially that Moſes wrote ſo particularly

larly of him, and the promiſe continued at large among them, until it was further limited to the family of David; by whom, and all the ſucceeding prophets, he was ſet forth in all the views he was deſigned to anſwer; ſometimes in the character of a ſervant, in great affliction and diſtreſs; ſometimes in all the authority of a great prophet, and the ſacredneſs of a prieſt; but moſtly in the majeſty of a great king, ſuch as never was in the earth, to whom all the nations of the earth ſhould willingly ſubmit themſelves. In the wiſdom of the great director, the ſpirit of prophecy was withdrawn for a long time before his appearance; and the poor creatures had got themſelves ſo intoxicated with the hopes of an univerſal monarchy, that when he came, they deſpiſed his mean worldly appearance, and thus fulfilled the prophecies concerning him, and proved him to be the very ſeed in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. Thus the record leads on our views of the ſeed from the beginning of the world, and never loſes ſight of him, until it lands us in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, the only one, who, by his miraculous birth, pro-

perly merited that title. In him the whole record centers; insomuch that we may say with assurance, that there is not one single fact there which does not one way or other tend to set him forth to our faith; and therefore it justly merits the title the Apostle John gives it, "The re-"cord which God has made," or the testimony which he has given, *concerning his Son.*

The great Apostle Paul was so sensible of this, that when he came to declare the testimony of God to the Corinthians, "he determined to know nothing among "them, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" and accordingly counted all things but loss and dung, in comparison with that excellency there is in the knowledge of him. He gives it accordingly as the sum of Christianity, "to know him, "and the power of his resurrection, and "the fellowship of his sufferings; being "made conformable unto him in his "death." We are apt to extol the happiness of the people who had access to a personal knowledge of Jesus. The Apostle Paul was of another mind. That was but knowing him after the flesh; a thing he valued

valued very little. We have all that we could have known of him by ſuch perſonal acquaintance with the man Jeſus, in the accounts that are left us of all that he began to do and to ſuffer, by four ear and eye witneſſes, and greatly more by his death, reſurrection, and the glory that followed: for his hiſtory has this ſingularity in it, that his life and death, which include the whole hiſtory of other men, make but a ſmall part of his. We are led back before the beginning of this world, and forward, as much beyond the end of it, into that immenſe eternity which none but he who inhabits it can comprehend. And as we find the Apoſtle pitching particularly upon his croſs, as what alone he choſe to boaſt and glory in, it is there we ſhall find the moſt advantageous ſituation for taking a diſtinct view of him whom we are ſo much concerned to know, and thence to gather his true character on ſuch certain facts as may be ſafely depended upon. And thence ſee what regards we owe him, and what we have to hope or to fear from him; that is, to form ſuch ſentiments of him as ſhall at once regulate and influence our conduct and behaviour to-

wards him, in ſuch an eaſy and natural way as we are accuſtomed to in ſimilar caſes among men. For herein lies the excellency of the way that God has choſen to diſpenſe his grace, that it is ſuited to the frame and conſtitution of the human nature with an exactneſs which none could reach but the creator, who underſtood it perfectly; which, by the way, is no contemptible evidence of its divine original.

I need ſay nothing of the death of the croſs, which is ſo well known to have been the moſt infamous, ſhameful, and painful, that the utmoſt ingenuity of human cruelty could invent; a kind of death which none were ſubjected to but the very baſeſt and vileſt of mankind; and yet his previous barbarous and cruel mockings, watchings, and ſcourgings, greatly enhanced his ſufferings; to all which we may add, another kind of ſufferings, which was not ſubjected to human perception, viz. the weight and burden of the ſins of the world, which he had taken upon himſelf, to put them away.

Such a death as this muſt very naturally put any man of common humanity to aſk, what could be the crimes that deſerved

ved to be expiated by ſuch a horrible puniſhment? But how muſt he be ſurpriſed to find, that he had paſſed the whole of his life in ſuch perfect innocence, as never another man did either before or after him; that from his birth to his death, he never either did or ſaid a wrong thing; inſomuch that his bittereſt enemies, when challenged openly by him to convict him of any one ſin, had nothing to anſwer; and even thoſe who, in the ſtrength of an ignorant mob, clamoured him to death, had nothing to charge him with, but his ſaying, (what their own Meſſiah muſt have ſaid whenever he appeared among them), that he was the Son of God?

But how much more ſurpriſed muſt any man of common reflection be, when he comes to be informed, (as we are moſt certainly informed), that he was a man of the moſt tender compaſſion, and the greateſt and moſt diſintereſted beneficence to mankind, which he never miſſed an opportunity of exerting; ſo that none who ever applied to him were ſent away without their errand; and in many inſtances he offered his aſſiſtance, and gave relief, without being aſked, or any how applied

to

to for it; that he conſecrated himſelf entirely to the noble buſineſs of doing good night and day, without any the leaſt advantage to himſelf; that, after all, the very foxes, and birds of the air, were better provided in worldly accommodations?

But the wonder muſt riſe above the higheſt aſtoniſhment, to find what almighty-like power he ſhewed forth on theſe occaſions. He healed all manner of diſeaſes and ailments of every kind; moſt of which were incurable by the moſt ſkilful phyſicians: he opened the ears of the deaf, gave eyes to ſuch as were born blind, and limbs to the maimed: nay, he carried his power higher, and ſhowed ſuch an abſolute command over all the powers of nature, that even the winds and ſeas, the moſt boiſterous of all, obeyed his orders; and the devils themſelves were ſo ſubject to his authority, that they durſt not ſo much as enter into a few ſwine without his leave and permiſſion.

The manner in which all theſe things were done by him was yet, if any thing could be ſo, more wonderful than the things themſelves: They were almoſt all done without the intervention of any means, but

but (as all things were firſt brought into being) by a bare word of command: and when at any time he made uſe of any thing like means, it was either a mere touch, or what in its nature ſeemed rather to threaten a contrary effect; and on three ſeveral perſons he exerted a power which muſt be acknowledged peculiar to the creator, viz. raiſing the dead; one of whom had been ſo long buried, that his neareſt relations concluded his body muſt be putrified.

But his benefactions were not confined merely, or even chiefly, to the bodies of men; his buſineſs lay eſpecially in inſtructing them in the things which concerned the kingdom of God; and in this great work he was abſolutely indefatigable. It is needleſs to mention particular inſtances; the goſpels are full of them. And there was ſomething ſo ſingular in his manner of teaching, that even his common hearers were aſtoniſhed at it: "For he "taught as one having authority, and not "as the ſcribes," the learned expounders of the law. The very officers who were ſent to apprehend him, could not help bearing witneſs, that never man ſpake like

like that man; and little wonder, when it comes to be known and conſidered who he really was.

Nicodemus's concluſion was evidently juſt, and the loweſt that could be made from ſuch facts as theſe, viz. "That he "was a teacher ſent from God." The reaſon he gave for it was convincingly good; for aſſuredly "none could do the "works which he did, unleſs God was "with him." This gives every thing he aſſerted the weight and authority of a divine oracle; and the Jews concluſion was no leſs evidently falſe, viz. That his teſtimony was not true, becauſe "he teſti-"fied of himſelf." Whereas indeed, tho' his teſtimony had been ſingle, yet being ſupported by ſuch miracles, it deſerved all the regard that was due to a divine teſtimony: And accordingly we find him oftener than once appealing to the works which he did, as a ſufficient evidence and teſtimony given for the truth of all his pretenſions. But however that was abundantly ſufficient, it was not the only way by which God teſtified concerning him. He teſtified by John, whom all acknowledged to be a prophet: and he teſtified yet more directly by a voice from heaven, "This is my be-

"loved

" loved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, " hear him." This gives the divine ſanction to every word he ſpake, and verifies what he ſaid of himſelf, " He that recei- " veth me, receiveth him that ſent me:" and it muſt be the ſame in the caſe of rejecting him.

The great truth which himſelf ſays he came into the world to bear witneſs to, was a very comprehenſive one; expreſſed ſhortly in this, That he was the very Chriſt, the Meſſiah, or anointed One, ſo long promiſed and propheſied of, whom the very people who oppoſed him profeſſed to be looking and waiting for. But there was another truth implied in that, which they could by no means bear the thoughts of, viz. that the true Meſſiah was not at all ſuch a perſon as they fondly expected. He was indeed to be a great king, infinitely greater than they could imagine: but his kingdom was not of this world; and therefore, either all purely ſpiritual, as it is during a preſent life in the hearts and ſpirits of men; or reſerved for a future ſtate, and to be entered upon by the reſurrection of the body in the world to come. And thus we are led back to the

accounts we have given us of him by the Old-Teſtament writers, which I cannot ſtand here to give any particular account of; for this, in effect, would be to tranſcribe all that Moſes, and the prophets, and pſalms, have ſaid of him, from the firſt mention of the ſeed of the woman, to what Malachi cloſes with, "The Lord "ſuddenly coming to his temple."

It will be proper however to obſerve, that the leading character of the Meſſiah, in which all that is teſtified concerning him lies, is the ſeed of the woman bruiſing the ſerpent's head, and Abraham's ſeed, in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed: and if we know what bleſſing is, and it was explained to Abraham, we will need no more to lead us into proper conceptions of him; for thus we find the bleſſing ſtands, "I am thy portion, "and exceeding great reward;" which comprehends infinitely more than any language can expreſs; the very ſame that is ſo often called eternal life in the New Teſtament. He is ſet forth in a variety of characters for anſwering the various neceſſities of mankind. Moſes ſpeaks of him as ſo great a prophet, that whoſoever did not hear

hear him ſhould be abſolutely deſtroyed, and that without remedy. David ſpeaks of him as a prieſt of a very ſingular and extraordinary kind; conſtituted by the great ſovereign of heaven and earth, a prieſt after the order of Melchizedek; and conſtituted with two very ſingular circumſtances, that he was appointed a prieſt for ever; and appointed with the ſolemn oath of the unchangeable God, who never does, nor can repent, of any conſtitution he hath made.

The reſt of the prophets generally repreſent him in two very different views; ſometimes in the condition of a ſervant, in a low and mean eſtate, deſpiſed and rejected of men, and even brought down to death and the grave: but moſt frequently, in all the pompous glory of a mighty conqueror, and an univerſal monarch; and very often with ſuch titles and royalties as can belong to none but the ſovereign of the univerſe; nay, frequently as Jehovah himſelf, the God of Iſrael. We find Jeſus ſpeaking of himſelf preciſely in the ſame manner; as, "ſent of the Father;" "receiving a commandment from the Fa-"ther, both what he ſhould ſpeak, and

" what he ſhould do;" that " he did " nothing of himſelf;" " did not ſeek " his own glory, nor did his own will;" but was entirely devoted to the will of him who ſent him; and, upon the whole, declares himſelf entirely reſigned to his diſpoſal. At the ſame time he ſpoke of himſelf in ſuch a manner, that the moſt learned among the Jews concluded that he made himſelf God. This they inferred from his always ſpeaking of God as his father, and himſelf as his ſon. And in common ſenſe their conſtruction was right; eſpecially when we find him aſſuming to himſelf every name, every title, and every work, by which God is diſtinguiſhed from the creature; that he knew the ſecrets of every heart, and needed no information about even thoſe who were the greateſt ſtrangers to him; that he took upon him profeſſedly to forgive ſin; that he profeſſed to have life in himſelf, even as the Father had; and that whatſoever the Father did, he did alſo.

The Apoſtle John, in his entrance upon the hiſtory he has left us of him, ſolves the myſtery, and makes all plain and conſiſtent. He tells us there of a certain divine

vine perſon, whom he calls by a name which our tranſlators render *The Word;* who, he ſays, was in the beginning; which muſt mean, before any thing was created; that "he was with God, and "that he himſelf was God;" "that by "him all things were made;" and leſt any ſhould imagine that he himſelf was made, he adds, that "nothing that was "made," no created thing, "was made "without him." Another apoſtle carries it further: That all things were not only created by him, but for him; that by him all things conſiſt, and that he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. This eternal Word he ſays was *made fleſh*, or rather incarnate, and tabernacled among men; his glory was vailed; but not ſo much that it might not be diſcovered to be the glory of the only begotten of the Father; and ſuch a fulneſs of grace and truth was in him, as could be no where lodged but in a divine perſon.

This leads us to the true conſtruction of a title often given in the earlieſt ages to one who appeared in the form of a man, but at the ſame time diſcovered himſelf either by his words or actions to be Jehovah,

vah, the God of Abraham, and the Iſraelitiſh nation. Our tranſlators render it always the *angel of the Lord*, the title commonly given to that order of creatures. Theſe are ſimply called *angels*, but I doubt if this title is ever given to any but that one diſtinguiſhed divine perſon. Literally rendered it is, *the angel*, that is, the meſſenger, he who is ſent, or the *agent Jehovah:* A very ſignificant deſcription of that divine agent, whoſe province it is to deal immediately and directly with the creature, and particularly with man; the one mediator between God and man; the ſame who has been, not without good appearance of reaſon, thought deſigned by two titles we find often mentioned, *The Word*, and, *The Name of Jehovah*, often with ſuch actions aſcribed to him they belong to, as can be given to none but a divine perſon.

This point was ſtrongly diſputed between Jeſus and his diſciples on one ſide, and the Jewiſh rulers on the other. The laſt thought they had certainly gained their point when they had him crucified, buried, and a ſeal ſet upon his grave. But it came out quite otherwiſe. He had ſaid before his

his death, what no creature could ſay, "that he had power to lay down his life, "and power to take it up again;" and had accordingly foretold that he would do ſo; adding withal, that no man had power to take his life from him; and that certainly was what no mere man could ſay. But the event juſtified both, and confounded his oppoſers: for he was declared to be the Son of God with power by his reſurrection from the dead; a fact which was ſo ſtrongly atteſted by great numbers who ſaw and knew him, that the truth of it could not be diſputed.

There was another thing he promiſed his diſciples when he was going to leave them, infinitely above the higheſt created power, and which none but God, the moſt high God, could perform. When they were overwhelmed with grief on what he had ſaid to them concerning his leaving them, he told them, that "he would ſend "them another comforter; the Spirit of "truth;" the very Spirit of God. He ſays indeed, "he would aſk the Father, "and he would ſend him;" that was great; but we find him in plain terms taking it upon himſelf. And in what an aſtoniſh-

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ing manner this was fulfilled on the day of Pentecoſt it is needleſs to ſay, as we have it ſo fully related: and there we have the ſtrongeſt and moſt convincing evidence of the comfortable truth he aſſerted to his diſciples, Matth. xxviii. 18. "That "all power was given him in heaven and "in earth;" and "that the Father had "ſo loved him his Son, as to commit ll "things into his hand."

By this ſhort ſketch of our Lord's hiſtory, it will eaſily appear, that no exception can be taken againſt his proper and eſſential Deity from any thing he has ſaid of his Father's being *greater* than him, or his acting in the character of his *ſervant*, directed and bound by his ſupreme authority, &c. It might be ſufficient to ſay, that it was the man Jeſus who ſpoke theſe things: but it is fully taken off by the character in which he acted, as mediator between God and man; by which office he was bound to execute all the counſels and purpoſes of grace, mercy, and love, to mankind; and in this character, as God and man united in one perſon, to rule and govern with all divine power and authority, during the preſent ſtate of things, until the

the kingdom being given up unto the Father, God ſhall be all in all, and there ſhall be no further occaſion for ſuch a diſtinction of divine characters, and no room left for that which gave the Son that ſubordination on which theſe expreſſions are founded.

CHAP. VI.

Chriſt's Life and Character further conſidered, as an Example.

I Have taken no notice of the birth of this extraordinary perſon, and the way in which he entered himſelf among Adam's children. And that was, indeed every way as extraordinary, whether we conſider the very mean and low circumſtances wherein he appeared in the eye of the world, or the very grand ones in the eyes of all that were capable of obſerving them. The manner of his conception by the power of the Moſt High in the womb of a pure virgin, the heavenly powers celebrating his coming into the world, the wonderful ſtar which intimated his birth

to the remoteſt Eaſt, which were overlooked by thoſe who had the beſt reaſon to attend to them; all theſe concurred to atteſt his greatneſs in the loweſt and moſt contemptible outward circumſtances; though theſe laſt, at the ſame time, were every way as proper, as it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren the ſons of Adam, in their loweſt ſtate of abaſement, ſin only excepted.

I need not obſerve, that it is from the terms in which the angels delivered the intimation of his birth to the ſhepherds, as "glad tidings of great joy," that the name was taken which denominated the publiſhing of theſe ſame tidings to the world, viz. the *goſpel*, or good news concerning Jeſus Chriſt; and they muſt have been ſuch indeed to all who had heard of the ſeed in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. But as we Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe, we could not have known how good the news were, until we were acquainted with his character, and how much the happineſs of mankind depended on him. Hence the word has been extended

tended to take in the whole of what we are taught to believe concerning Chriſt, and the ends and purpoſes for which he came into the world. And thus the whole of that record which God has made concerning his Son, is called the *goſpel of Chriſt*.

The angels ſong contains the ſubſtance of it; the uniting of two things, which, to all created wiſdom, muſt have appeared abſolutely incompatible: "Glory to God "in the higheſt, and on earth peace, and "good will towards men." The doubt which put even Solomon's faith to a ſtand, all things conſidered, was a very puzzling one, "Will God in very deed dwell with "men upon earth?" and who could have reſolved it in the affirmative, had it not been for the appearance of Jeſus Chriſt? In his perſon God has condeſcended to unite himſelf to man in ſuch a manner, as, even if we knew no more of him, muſt give ground to expect ſome very great advantage from this ſingular honour done our nature; the neareſt approach the creator can make to the creature. But none durſt have preſumed to carry their expectations ſo high as our Lord did in his laſt prayer, where we find him improving it

to eſtabliſh ſuch an union between God and all who believe in him, as ſhall make them *one* in the Father and the Son. In this grand point all the counſels of God terminate; and there the human nature is exalted to the higheſt pitch of perfection and happineſs, far above what the moſt ſanguine advocates for the dignity of it could ever imagine.

The firſt ſtep that can be taken toward this, muſt be what our Lord ſays is eternal life, viz. "to know the only true God." The beſt deſcription that can be made of an inviſible being muſt labour under many defects, and hardly make any impreſſion on creatures of our make; unleſs it be illuſtrated and confirmed by ſenſible facts. His eternal power and Godhead are clearly ſeen from the creation of the world, being underſtood by the things that he hath made; but what we have either to hope or fear from him needs further illuſtration: and upon the whole, we need to have ſome image or model to form our apprehenſions upon. The old image given us in man is ſo greatly defaced, that it is in danger of darkening inſtead of illuſtrating the divine perfections. In Jeſus Chriſt we have a complete one. He is the image of the inviſible

viſible God, ſo complete, that whoſoever has ſeen and known him, muſt alſo ſee and know the Father. It muſt be ſo; for under that vail of human fleſh which he aſſumed, God really dwelt; and whatever he did or ſaid, the Father was always well pleaſed with him: and it could not be otherwiſe; for he neither did nor ſaid any thing, but what he had in commandment from the Father.

We need ſay nothing of the ſpecimens he gave of almighty creating power, which he ſhewed forth in the miracles which he wrought; nor of perfect knowledge and wiſdom, that he could never be miſtaken in any of his meaſures. Goodneſs is the attribute we are moſt naturally intereſted in; and there is not one more generally miſtaken. Our indigence makes us conſider beneficence as at leaſt a neceſſary ingredient, if not the very eſſence of it, as if God could not be good unleſs he made every creature as happy as he can. This at firſt ſight appears ſuch an abſurdity, that no body will profeſs it. But many are loath to allow, that a good God will ſuffer any creature of his to be finally miſerable. But ſo far is perfect goodneſs from

from ſuch a tendency, that it is really the moſt terrible character that can be, to a bad being; even more ſo than juſtice itſelf, which is only a certain modification of goodneſs. Perfect goodneſs cannot bear evil, but muſt root it out of his world, and abſolutely deſtroy it. It is that very work of the devil the Son of God came to deſtroy. And as there is no real evil in the world but ſin, there are only two ways in which it can be deſtroyed: the firſt is, by making a ſeparation between the ſinner and his ſin, and thus deſtroying ſin, and ſaving the ſinner; or where that is not effected, by deſtroying the ſinner and ſin together. Now, it is the very buſineſs for which our Lord came into the world, to ſave his people from their ſins. But when men will not come to him that they may have life, he has declared plainly the judgement he will certainly give againſt them, "even everlaſting deſtruction from "the preſence of the Lord, and the glory "of his power."

It muſt therefore be but a very ſmall gleam of hope that can be gathered from this general view of the divine goodneſs. It is from the riches of ſovereign grace,

mercy,

mercy, and compaſſion, that the hope of ſuch creatures as we are, poor helpleſs ſinners, muſt ſpring. Theſe are views of God which are no where to be had but in Jeſus Chriſt; and there they are all to be ſeen in their greateſt perfection, ſuch as not only gives hope, but the ſtrongeſt aſſurance in the moſt deſperate-like ſtate which a ſinner can poſſibly be in. For when we look further into this his amiable image, we muſt perceive the higheſt benevolence, kindneſs, and goodwill to mankind; ſuch a tenderneſs of ſympathy and compaſſion, and ſuch bountiful and diſintereſted beneficence, as the world never had one inſtance of; ever ready to inſtruct the ignorant, to relieve the miſerable and wretched, and to heal every ailment of body or mind; no caſe ſo deſperate as to exceed his power, nor any ſinner ſo vile as to be below his notice. Seven devils, or even a legion, poſſeſſing one perſon, did not hinder the ſinner's acceptance; and the greatneſs of the ſins which were forgiven, only made the ſinner to love him more.

All the cures he performed either on the ſouls or bodies of men, with all their endearing

endearing circumſtances, which were very many, are ſo many pictures, if we may expreſs it ſo, of the mind of God. His marvellous love and kindneſs to mankind; and his tender mercies, which have been for ever of old.

There was one thing further in the conduct of Jeſus which deſerves our particular notice, viz. the abſolute contempt which he ſhowed of all thoſe things which the world are ſo madly fond of, the riches and honours, the power and glory, and all the pleaſures and enjoyments of a preſent life. And this ſhewed at once how contemptible all theſe things are in God's eye, and how much they are below the regard of a perfect man; ſo that our fondneſs for any the moſt agreeable of them, inſtead of being an accompliſhment, is a ſure evidence of the degenerate baſeneſs of a mind ſunk greatly below the ſtandard allotted by the creator.

This leads us forward to another invaluable advantage we have in the character of Jeſus Chriſt, viz. a pattern of perfection, which we may ſafely follow, and the only one we may follow without exception. For there we ſee how God himſelf would

would live, nay, and how he did live, when among men, in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. He not only brought life and immortality into open light by his reſurrection from the dead, but opened up, and went before, as the captain of ſalvation, in the way that leads to that eternal life, ſetting an example that we may follow his ſteps. And accordingly we find, that in all the directions he gave for entering into life, this was always the concluding part, *Follow me.* And thence he lays it down as a general rule, "If any man ſerve me, "let him follow me; and where I am, "there ſhall alſo my ſervant be." And the Apoſtle John ſpeaks the ſame language: "He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought "himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he "walked."

This is a matter of the utmoſt importance, and is not to be accompliſhed by obſerving ſome one or more pieces of his example, or to copy from thence this or the other virtue, as I have heard ſome ſpeak. The whole muſt be taken together; and, as the Apoſtle wiſely directs, "the ſame mind muſt be in us that was "in Chriſt Jeſus;" and, as another adviſes,

ſes, " Arm ourſelves with the ſame mind " which was in him when he ſuffered for " us in the fleſh:" A large field, and which deſerves to be very particularly conſidered, as indeed it takes in the whole ſyſtem of practical Chriſtianity. I can only point out a few generals, which will give ſome notion of the whole.

And here, in the firſt place, if we mind to follow him, we muſt ſet out upon the ſame principles of truth he did. We cannot indeed propoſe to attain ſuch comprehenſive views as he had of the ſpiritual and eternal world; without which, it is impoſſible to attain any right knowledge of the preſent one in which we live: but he has given us his mind concerning both the one and the other; and if we dare believe his teſtimony, we ſhall ſee both in the ſame light in which he, who perfectly underſtood them, did; eſpecially with the advantage which we have of his example, and the manner in which he treated both; the contempt he always ſhowed for a preſent world, and the high regard he had to his heavenly Father, and the glory of the unſeen eternal world. It is only by this teſtimony that we can know any thing of

theſe

theſe unſeen things, and exactly as the ſtrength of our faith or belief of this teſtimony is, ſuch will be our conformity to his views of theſe things.

But his was not a mere ſpeculative knowledge of them, it was reduced into a ſyſtem of perfect wiſdom. All his ſentiments were formed on his infallible views of truth, ſo that he could never be miſtaken; and all his judgements, both of perſons and things, were equally infallible. This is ſuch a perfection as no other man can pretend to. But all our ſentiments, that is, our way of thinking and judging of things, muſt be formed upon the ſame ſtandard; to eſteem and deſpiſe, to love and hate, to hope and fear, &c. and of courſe to purſue and avoid every thing, juſt as he did before us. Here our wiſdom lies, and this is the only cure for our natural folly. He who ſees things as he did, the truth, reality, and worth of eternal and unſeen things, and has his heart and affections formed upon them, muſt entertain the ſame contempt he had of all that a preſent world has either to allure or frighten us with. Where-ever the love of God is

ſo ſhed abroad in the heart as to become the ruling principle, there the world loſes its hold; the light of his glory, as it ſhines in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, caſts ſhame and diſgrace on all worldly glory.

There was one thing our Lord was moſt remarkable in, and which makes a great part of the pattern he hath ſet us; I mean, his perfect ſelf-denial, and abſolute reſignation to his heavenly Father's will, and the moſt perfect acquieſcence in it. Thus we find him always profeſſing, that he came not into the world to do his own will, but the will of him that ſent him. Nor did he ever ſeek his own glory, but his heavenly Father's; and to this great end the whole buſineſs of his life was devoted. The Apoſtle ſets this ſelf-denial and reſignation in a very ſtrong light, by the high rank which he held: For "though he was in the "form of God," and poſſeſſed all the glory and bleſſedneſs which belong to ſuch an exalted ſtation; yet he willingly "made him-"ſelf of no reputation, was found in fa-"ſhion as a man, took upon him the form "of a ſervant," and ſubmitted to all the ſorrows and ſufferings that could take place without

without ſin. In conformity to this, he taught his diſciples to ſay in their prayers, "Thy "will be done;" and made it the firſt ſtep every one ſhould take who propoſed to follow him, "To deny themſelves." I do but juſt obſerve how ſhamefully this precept, or rather ſolemn certification, is commonly trifled away: when we prevail with ourſelves to renounce any trifling gratification, we give it the name of *mortification* and *ſelf-denial*. But it is ourſelves we are called to deny; and it is the fleſh, or old man, all that we are by Adam, which we are called to mortify, reſigning ourſelves entirely to the will and diſpoſal of our heavenly Father.

What our bleſſed pattern adds in that certification he gave his hearers, determines the meaning of this part, and carries the reſignation recommended by his example to its proper height: he was obedient to the death, the death of the croſs; and if we mean to follow him, we muſt do as he did, deny ourſelves, and take up our croſs. It were to be wiſhed that this was the only inſtance where the ſcripture-meaning is obſcured or miſtaken, by applying to the words the ſenſe

which

which has been affixed to them in later times. We have, I know not how, affixed the name of croſſes to the little ruffles we meet with in common life; and when we can any how ſubmit without fretting and murmuring, we flatter ourſelves that we have fulfilled his command, and may paſs among his followers. But the words he uſes had no ſuch meaning when he uttered them. The croſs was the inſtrument of death; and to take up one's croſs, was to act as convicted criminals did, ſubmitting themſelves to the death awarded them: and as that is the caſe of every child of Adam, nothing leſs can be meant by it, than acknowledging the juſtice of the ſentence, and accordingly reſigning and giving up the life which it ſtrikes at, (and that is unqueſtionably all the life we have from the firſt Adam), into the hands of juſtice, to be deſtroyed, and have a final end put to it.

This is a very hard ſaying to the children of Adam; it is renouncing and giving up their all; and which indeed is impoſſible for man to do, but in the ſtrength of that faith and hope through which our bleſſed pattern endured the croſs,

croſs, and deſpiſed at once the ſhame and the torment, becauſe he knew that it was in this way he was to enter into his glory. In this proſpect he chearfully reſigned himſelf to a ſcene of ſufferings, ſuch as no man, either before or after him, was or could be expoſed to, having the curſe which ſin had brought on all the children of Adam, the whole weight and burden of it, lying upon him; and thus "being "made perfect through ſufferings, he be- "came the author of eternal ſalvation to "all them that obey him."

This leads us into a further, and, if poſſible, a more intereſting view of Jeſus Chriſt; as in him we have not only life and immortality fairly brought to light, but the foundations of faith and hope laid ſo ſtrong, that what ſeemed abſolutely impoſſible for man to do, becomes the eaſieſt and moſt eligible thing in the world. The reſigning and giving up the forfeited life we have from Adam into the hands of juſtice, comes out to be no more but exchanging it for one, in all the views that can be taken of it, infinitely preferable; as if a condemned criminal, by ſubmitting to the ſentence, ſhould come to the poſſeſſion of

of a rich inheritance; which is the very comfortable view that the Apoſtle gives us of this change: "We know, that if our "earthly houſe of this tabernacle were "diſſolved, we have a building of God, "a houſe not made with hands, eternal "in the heavens." And ſurely thoſe who have ſuch a proſpect, will be longing after that bleſſed hope.

Among all the wiſe and gracious purpoſes which were anſwered by fixing mankind in the ſtate wherein they are now found, this is one of the moſt gracious and beneficent, That every man muſt, if he has any reflection at all, find himſelf in ſuch circumſtances, as that nothing but abſolutely free grace can relieve him, and that it is abſolutely impoſſible he can live any other way; and it is really aſtoniſhing, that any man of common ſenſe could ever overlook ſuch an obvious and important truth, or entertain the leaſt ſhadow of hope on any other grounds.

It is as plain, that the moſt high God muſt be abſolute maſter of his own grace, to give or to with-hold his free favours, and to extend them to whom he pleaſes, and in what manner, and by what means, he

pleaſes.

pleaſes. We need not, for ſupporting or illuſtrating this claim, ſuppoſe, that the creator took any advantage againſt mankind from the tranſgreſſion of their firſt parents; much leſs that he acquired any new rights by their forfeiture. The caſe would have been juſt the ſame had they been all created in the ſtate they are now in; only we ſhould have wanted that warning-piece, and the inſtruction it gives us, how impoſſible it is for a creature to live any other way, than by the mere grace of the creator.

The native and neceſſary conſequence of this is, that no creature can have any reaſon to expect any additional favour whatſoever, or any higher ſtation in God's world, than that which he finds himſelf in, whether placed there by his creator, or which he himſelf hath choſen; I ſay, which he himſelf hath choſen; becauſe it is not only a poſſible, but a very common caſe among men, to ſink themſelves, either by indolence, or ſomething worſe, into a ſtate greatly below that which the conſtitutional powers the creator gave them, might either have kept them in, or raiſed them to. And ſurely no man will

imagine, that the creator is bound to repair the waſte that the creature hath made. Nothing but a declaration from himſelf of what he will do by a ſovereignly free promiſe, can warrant any ſuch expectation.

Such a promiſe, or a declaration equivalent to a promiſe, we find has been in the world from the time that ſin and death entered together. By what the Apoſtle ſays to Titus, we are warranted to take it greatly higher; for he ſays expreſsly, that "God, who cannot lie, promiſed that very eternal life which they had the hope of, *before the world began.*" And that was ſurely before Adam had ſinned, or was ſo much as created: And it is evident, that there was none then to receive the promiſe, but he who was ſet up from everlaſting, the ſame who appeared in due time in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. The ſame apoſtle confirms it, and carries it yet further; for he ſays to Timothy, and ſays it as an acknowledged truth that no Chriſtian in thoſe days had any doubt about, that this grace was not only *promiſed*, but actually *given them in Chriſt Jeſus* in that antemundane period.

Our Lord gives us the progreſs of this promiſe,

promiſe, in what he ſays of it to his diſciples under another notion, very common with him and his apoſtles, *the kingdom of God*, *the kingdom of heaven*, and often ſimply, *the kingdom*; where, he ſays, the ſubjects are all admitted to eat and drink at his table; as much as to ſay, they are abundantly provided out of his fulneſs. This kingdom, he ſays, *the Father hath appointed to him*. So our tranſlators render it: but the word, in the original, ſignifies "the making a thing over;" whether by free gift, or on certain terms or conditions, it does not ſpecify. By this deed of the Father, he has the property veſted in himſelf, and full powers to convey it to whom he pleaſes. And thus "it pleaſed the Father, that in him all "fulneſs ſhould dwell;" that is, all the grace that ever was to be ſhown to mankind.

Thus we have Jeſus Chriſt ſtanding at the head of mankind in the new creation, and in relation to the ſpiritual and eternal world, juſt as Adam ſtood in the firſt creation, and in relation to this preſent world; and the truth, as it is in Jeſus, will be found to anſwer the figure

with great exactneſs. There was, and it was abſolutely neceſſary there ſhould be, a very great odds between the two in many reſpects. The Apoſtle gives us the principal ones: "The firſt Adam was "made a living ſoul, the ſecond a quick-"ening ſpirit; the firſt was of the earth, "earthy, the ſecond was the Lord from "heaven." But in other reſpects they agree with ſurpriſing exactneſs; which may reaſonably determine us to think, that the firſt creation, and the way in which men were brought into the world by that original conſtitution, was deſigned by divine wiſdom to be a ſort of ſenſible image and repreſentation of the ſpiritual, and therefore inviſible, manner in which men are brought into the ſpiritual and eternal world: and accordingly it is upon this plan that all the deſcriptive accounts we have of it are formed.

By what we were juſt now obſerving from the Apoſtle, and our Lord's own words, we find he received the grant of the kingdom, or eternal life, from the Father's hand, and had it actually lodged in him, as our firſt father had the life of all mankind lodged in him: and as there is no way

way of entering among mankind in this world, but by deriving from Adam in the courſe of what is called *natural generation*, no more can any one have acceſs to the ſpiritual world, without deriving from Jeſus Chriſt in the courſe of regeneration, or by that new birth in which our Lord inſtructed Nicodemus. Each of theſe lives reſemble the original from which they are drawn. Adam's children, all of them, bear the image of the earthy man, and their life is of the ſame kind, neceſſarily terminating in death. The children by the ſecond birth, are all formed upon the heavenly man, from whom they derive their life. They all bear his image, and their life is, like the quickening Spirit from whom they derive it, ſpiritual and eternal.

But that which calls for our ſpecial obſervation is this: Both received the terms by which their reſpective lives were to be held, as they were the only two who, each in his ſeveral kind, had acceſs to deal directly and immediately with God. The terms were very different, and ſo was the event. Thoſe given to the firſt man, were the eaſieſt that can well be imagined: but

but he did not fulfil them; and by his tranſgreſſion, entailed death on all his deſcendents, along with that life which he conveys to them. "Thus by one man "ſin entered into the world, and death "by ſin; and ſo death hath paſſed upon "all men, for that all have ſinned." And there ſhould have been an end of all fleſh, if the ſovereign gift of grace had not prevented it.

The terms on which the kingdom, or eternal life, was granted to the Lord from heaven, the quickening Spirit, or as himſelf expreſſes it, *the commandment which he received from the Father*, which ſome have, not improperly, called *the law of the Mediator*, were indeed the hardeſt that could be impoſed upon any creature, and ſuch as none but himſelf could have fulfilled. They are all ſummed up in his obedience unto the death, even the death of the croſs: A kind of death which was marked out by God himſelf many hundred years before, and a curſe pronounced on him that was hanged on it. And yet it was not ſimply ſubmitting even to this death that could anſwer the purpoſe; but a continued ſinleſs obedience, and overcoming

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that very tempter who had ſeduced and ruined, as he thought, the firſt of mankind. Accordingly we find, that he was led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs to be tempted of the devil, with all the advantage his helliſh malice could deſire. And thus we are led forward to conſider the ſeed of the woman, the ſeed of Abraham and David, the anointed choſen One, in that relation to mankind which he has choſen to ſtand in; and it concerns us much to know how he has acquitted himſelf in this great and important truſt, that we may at once know how to apply to him, and give him the glory that is due unto his name.

CHAP. VII.

View of Chriſt as a Prieſt.

BY what we were juſt now obſerving, we may ſee the reaſon of that title which we find often given to him, and which, in effect, he aſſumes to himſelf, his Father's *ſervant*. The Prophet Iſaiah has given us his commiſſion in few, but very

very comprehenſive words: "He, JEHOVAH, ſaid, It is a light thing that thou "ſhouldſt be my ſervant to raiſe up the "tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the pre-"ſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give thee "for a light to the Gentiles, that thou "mayſt be my ſalvation unto all the "ends of the earth." And hence the comfortable titles of *Saviour* and *Redeemer* take their riſe, which expreſs the general deſign and iſſue of his whole miniſtry, and which we ſhall meet with, after we have conſidered, by what means, and in what character, he carries on and accompliſhes this great work.

I formerly obſerved, how he is repreſented by Moſes and the prophets in three diſtinct views; as a prophet, prieſt, and king; all united in the one perſon of the Meſſiah, or God's Anointed. There is one general character which comprehends them all, "*Mediator* between God and man," which has been, and yet may be miſtaken, by applying the modern ſenſe of that word, and making it the ſame with a peace-maker, one whoſe buſineſs it is to go between, and make up matters between two parties at variance. He is indeed both the

the peace-maker and the peace-keeper between God and man. But that is far from reaching either the import of the word, or the extent of his office. The word denotes a middle perſon ſtanding between God and man, and managing the whole correſpondence between them: That as God never ſpeaks to man, nor beſtows any favours of any kind, but by him; ſo no man can come to God, nor apply to him with acceptance, but by his means, "who is the way, the truth, and the life."

He is particularly deſigned, "The Mediator of the *Covenant;*" that is, of the conſtitution of grace, or grant of life, that order which God has eſtabliſhed for diſpenſing his mercy and grace to periſhing ſinners. Which deſignation has by ſome been thought ſufficiently anſwered, if he has procured ſuch a mitigation of the original law of perfection, and ſuch gentle terms of acceptance, as men in our ſituation may come up to. But the laws of God admit of no mitigation, but muſt be punctually and literally fulfilled, without any alteration or favourable conſtruction whatſoever: and, I think, we are hardly warranted to ſay, that the Mediator ob-

tained even the covenant itſelf, the conſtitution or grant of grace, though it is by him the whole is made effectual: "For "all things are of God, who reconciles "mankind to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt;" who, in the whole of his miniſtration, acts preciſely by the commandment he received from the Father.

The true import of this title is expreſſed by another, which is uſed but once in terms, but often, I might ſay always, ſuppoſed and referred to, "The *ſurety* of the "covenant;" which has been in a manner confined to one branch of his office, viz. his undertaking, in behalf of ſinners of mankind, to make out that obedience to the law in which they failed. But ſuppoſing this to be the caſe, that makes him only a ſurety for a party, which is a quite different thing from being ſurety of the covenant, whoſe buſineſs it is to ſee all the parts and articles of it punctually fulfilled, both the terms on which the grant ſtands, and the promiſed bleſſings conveyed, preciſely as they ſtand in the grant.

The Apoſtle, in his epiſtle to the Hebrews, uſes theſe two titles promiſcuouſly, and explains them by what was perfectly well

well understood by those to whom he wrote, viz. the office and business of *priesthood*, which, as we are well informed, consisted precisely in acting as mediators between God and the people, and sureties for the putting away of sin to the people; but not at all as sureties for them any further than by performing the terms on which forgiveness was promised, viz. offering the appointed sacrifices. And the whole of that epistle, and all the reasoning there, clear and strong as it is, stands on this one proposition, That what the priests were under the old covenant, or grant of the land of Canaan to the Israelitish nation, that Jesus Christ was in the new and better covenant, the grant of eternal life to all mankind who will receive him.

The account the Apostle gives of the priesthood affords a very distinct view of it: "Every high priest taken from a-"mong men, is ordained for men in "things pertaining to God, (or rather "wherein they have to do with God), to "offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin." And had not the wisdom of God instituted such an office among men, the me-

diation and interceſſion of Chriſt is ſuch a ſingular thing, that we ſhould never have been able to form any tolerable conceptions of it, or found words and language to ſpeak about it. There is nothing like it either in the natural or moral world, but what has been copied from this original. Prieſts and ſacrifices have been found in every nation; and thence an image, more or leſs perfect, laid to our hands, by which we may attain more or leſs perfect views of this very important ſubject; and the better we are acquainted with theſe emblems and figures, the more perfect will our views be of the truth, as it is in Jeſus.

We have therefore great reaſon to be thankful for, what the wiſdom of the world ſo much deſpiſes, the very particular account we have of the inſtitution of the prieſthood, and the ſeveral kinds of ſacrifices, for anſwering the occaſions and different caſes of the worſhippers; the ſeveral kinds of waſhings and purifications, from the ſeveral ſorts of defilement and pollution, which diſqualified them from joining with the congregation, and approaching the place of God's preſence; which,

which, in a very lively manner, repreſent at once the guilt and pollution of ſin, and that fear and ſhame with which they are naturally attended. In theſe conſiſts what the Apoſtle very juſtly terms *an evil conſcience*, which muſt be ſome how or other removed, and what he calls *the conſcience* (or rather *conſciouſneſs*) *of ſins*, taken away, before any offender can acquire confidence enough to appear in the preſence of God; which he never will do, until he is ſure of finding acceptance.

This muſt be the greateſt diſtreſs a creature can be in, whenever it is felt. But felt it never will be, until the ſinner knows what ſin is, and the unhappineſs of being ſhut out from God, and expoſed to the inconceivable effects of his anger, and irreconcileable enmity againſt ſin; which, it muſt always be minded, is but the native tendency of his perfect goodneſs. And hence it was ſo ordered in that wiſe conſtitution, that no man could have the benefit of the remedy provided, the ſacrifice which put away the ſin, but he that was ſenſible of the abſolute need of it; for thus the order ſtood.

The offender muſt bring the ſacrifice

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to the prieſt; and that not of his own chuſing, or what he thought beſt and fitteſt, but that which God had appointed in that particular caſe.

He muſt make a free and full confeſſion of his ſin over the ſacrifice. This was often, if not always, accompanied with laying his hand on the head of the victim, which was the ſign of its being ſubſtituted in his place, to bear that puniſhment which he had deſerved. And it is to be obſerved, that no repentance, acknowledgement, or confeſſion, however ſincere, could be accepted in any other manner.

The prieſt, who, by his office, ſtood bound to receive the ſacrifice, took the ſin upon himſelf, to put it away, by offering the victim in the manner appointed in the law. But if he failed in any point, the puniſhment of that lay upon himſelf, and was not imputed to the offender from the time that the ſacrifice was taken off his hand.

But all this would have been but a ſlender foundation for the faith and hope of a ſinner, had he been left there. The divine inſtitution indeed promiſed much, as he might thence be aſſured, that there was

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ſome great purpoſe to be anſwered by it. But had it not been for the promiſe annexed to the ſacrifice, that the ſin ſhould be forgiven, he muſt have been left in great uncertainty about the event. But however ignorant he may be ſuppoſed to have been of the reaſon of the inſtitution, and however unpromiſing-like the means might appear, he might with great aſſurance reſt on the word of a faithful God: and therefore the buſineſs of the prieſt did not end with the offering, until by the ſprinkling of the blood he had made the atonement, and ſecured the promiſed bleſſing.

The ſervice of the great day of atonement, when the high prieſt acted on behalf of the whole people, was the completeſt repreſentation of Chriſt's prieſthood. I need not enter into particulars: it may ſuffice to obſerve, that the high prieſt at that time only, entered into the moſt holy place, preſented the blood with incenſe, and came out, and bleſſed the people in the name of JEHOVAH.

There is one circumſtance which we find the Apoſtle takes particular notice of, "That no man taketh this honour unto "himſelf,

" himſelf, but he that is called of God, " as was Aaron." This is a material point, upon which the whole ſucceſs of this miniſtration depends. And indeed, until we are ſecured in this, our expectations muſt at beſt be but wavering and uncertain. We are not left at an uncertainty here. The Apoſtle tells us, that " Chriſt did not glorify himſelf, to be " made an high prieſt;" but was inſtalled with a ſolemnity ſuch as never any other was, viz. with the oath of the Moſt High; and that his prieſthood was of an order, too, greatly ſuperior to that of Aaron, the prieſt and the king being united in one perſon; nay, that he was a king too of a peculiar kind; " King of righteouſneſs, " and King of peace:" for ſo the Apoſtle interprets the name and place of Melchizedek, who appears to have been marked out in the hiſtory for a figure of a perpetual prieſthood, without beginning or ending, without predeceſſor or ſucceſſor.

We are not told by the Pſalmiſt, whoſe words are quoted by the Apoſtle, when this oath was given: but it muſt have been as ancient as the covenant or conſtitution to which it belonged, and given at the

the ſame time that the terms of the grant were laid upon the Redeemer, and eternal life lodged in his hand. Nor is it any objection, that he did not enter upon the execution of his office until he came in the fleſh. The all-wiſe God knew perfectly whom he had to deal with; he had laid the burden on one who had ſtrength to bear it, and was as faithful as he was able. He could ſee at one glance from one end of time to another, and it was the ſame to him as if it had been done.

The high worth and dignity of the prieſt promiſes fair, and our expectations muſt be greatly raiſed when we conſider his ſacrifice. The Apoſtle ſays, "he muſt "have ſomething to offer." Burnt offerings of beaſts, and ſuch ſacrifices as the Moſaical prieſts offered, were all rejected; and indeed much below his dignity. "Through the eternal Spirit he offered "himſelf without ſpot unto the Father," and thus put away ſin for ever by that one ſacrifice, and perfected for ever all thoſe who are ſanctified. The Apoſtle's reaſoning is ſtrong and concluſive: "If "the blood of bulls, and of goats, and "the aſhes of an heifer ſprinkling the

" unclean, ſanctified unto the purifying " of the fleſh; how much more ſhall the " blood of the Son of God purge our " conſciences from dead works to ſerve " the living God?"

I need but juſt obſerve, that all the expreſſions we find made uſe of in the record to deſcribe the nature and deſign of his death and ſuffering, ſuch as, his dying and laying down his life for his people, giving his life a ranſom, redeeming them by his blood, &c. all of them appear but ſo many equivalent terms, by which the effect of his ſacrifice is explained and ſet forth; ſo that there does not ſeem any neceſſity for a plain Chriſtian's entering into the many intricate debates which have been broached concerning the nature and effects of what is called *Chriſt's ſatisfaction*, which can mean no more but his perfect fulfilment of the terms of life; and when we know that the ſacrifice was accepted, we know all that we have any occaſion for.

But however high our expectations may be juſtly raiſed by the views of ſuch a prieſt, and ſuch a ſacrifice, (and we may very firmly aſſure ourſelves that they will

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anſwer all the purpoſes for which ſuch a miniſtration was intended); yet until that is certainly known, we muſt ſtill be at a loſs; and we can know it no other way than the Old-Teſtament worſhippers did, viz. by the declaration and promiſe annexed to the ſacrifice. So far as that goes, our faith and confidence in the ſacrifice may, and ought to go, and no further. The Moſaical ſacrifices had no more annexed to them but the forgiveneſs of ſin, and that anſwered their deſign. Pardon is the native intention of a ſacrifice. This is what the ſinner is moſt anxious to obtain; and with good reaſon, not only as it relieves the preſent and moſt ſenſibly felt diſtreſs, but as it is abſolutely neceſſary to open the way for, and to render the ſinner capable of, receiving all further favours and benefactions from the hand of God, who is ſo eſſentially good and holy, that he can have no dealings with a ſinner in the way of grace, until ſin is taken away.

But had the promiſe, or grant annexed to this ſacrifice, ſtopt there, we muſt have found ourſelves in no better circumſtances than thoſe who applied to the Moſaic

ſacrifices, and could expect no more but to be reſtored to the poſſeſſion of the forfeited life, and that without any ſecurity againſt falling again into the ſame unhappy circumſtances. Indeed it neither was nor could be the intention of our great high prieſt, nor of him who appointed the ſacrifice, to reſtore any one to Adam's life. There was an irrevocable ſentence given againſt it; the ſame which goes ſo often under the name of a curſe, and which never leaves the ſubject it faſtens on, until it has brought it to abſolute deſtruction. Adam's child muſt die. But then, in the virtue of this great ſacrifice, there comes along with the promiſe of pardon a free grant or deed of gift of what is infinitely better, even eternal life.

But there is one circumſtance, in which it is not unlikely ſome will imagine, that the Jews had greatly the advantage of us. They had the ſacrifice at hand, and it was no great journey to find the prieſt, who, they knew, might not refuſe to take their ſin off their hand: and an advantage it was, if it be a higher privilege to live by ſenſe, than to live by faith; which we indeed muſt do, if we propoſe to make any

any thing of this ſacrifice, or to have any dealings with this great high prieſt. And yet, after all, there was more of faith, even in their ſervice, than every one will ſuſpect. Faith was the very life and ſpirit of it; without which, it could not ſubſiſt. I do not mean only the neceſſity there was of looking beyond the figure and ſhadow, to the great high prieſt and ſacrifice repreſented thereby; without which it was a mere carcaſe, a dead image, which could profit no further than a preſent world, and the preſent periſhing life; but even for that they had no ſecurity but what aroſe from the divine inſtitution, and the promiſe of forgiveneſs on the right offering of the ſacrifice; for which, in moſt caſes, they had no more but a mere implicit faith in the fidelity of the prieſt, whoſe character very often afforded very little encouragement to truſt him in a matter of ſuch moment.

As our great high prieſt, and his ſacrifice, his inſtalment and fidelity, give vaſt advantages to our faith; ſo in a ſpecial manner doth the aſſurance we have of the acceptance of his ſacrifice. When the high prieſt entered into the holieſt with the

the blood of his ſacrifice, the ſinner had no ſecurity for his being accepted, but that he came out alive. Now "our high "prieſt is not entered into the holy places "made with hands, but into heaven it- "ſelf, there to appear in the preſence of "God for us." It is true he is not come out again, as the Jewiſh high prieſt did. But hence ariſeth our ſtrongeſt aſſurance, that he has done the buſineſs effectually; and by his one ſacrifice ſo put away ſin, that it ſhall be remembered no more. So that he has nothing left him to do, but to diſpenſe and give forth that life which is now abſolutely lodged in his hand, until he comes again, once for all, to receive his people to himſelf, "that where he is, "there they may be alſo."

Thus we find all things ſtanding as in the record which the Apoſtle John tells us God has made concerning his Son, or the teſtimony he has given, viz. "That God "hath given to us eternal life, and that "this life is in his Son: ſo that he that "hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath "not the Son, hath not life." Which, whoſoever believes not, he aſſures us, makes God a liar, becauſe he doth not

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believe his teſtimony. This, one ſhould think, might fully determine what has wrought much diſturbance among Chriſtians, viz. who the *us* are to whom God is ſaid to have given eternal life. No body ſure will doubt of his having given it to ſuch as are really put in poſſeſſion of it. All the doubt is, whether God has made ſuch a deed of gift, ſuch a grant of life, as every one who hears it is bound to believe, with ſuch a firmneſs of faith, as ſhall determine him to flee to it as a refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before him there. And how can that be a queſtion, when all who hear the goſpel are not only called, but commanded, under the moſt terrible penalty, to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, to put their truſt in his ſacrifice and interceſſion, with the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, that in this way they certainly ſhall obtain pardon and eternal life? But if the great high prieſt and his ſacrifice are either deſpiſed or neglected, they ſurely can have no more to expect, than the deſpiſers of Moſes's law, "to die without mercy."

The Apoſtle gives us the ſtate of the old Iſraelites as a parallel caſe to thoſe who live under the goſpel, and have the teſtimony

teſtimony of God declared to them: and indeed it is ſo parallel, that it ſeems to have been made for the purpoſe. The grant of the land of Canaan was given to Abraham, the father of that people, and in ſuch terms, that God himſelf, who cannot lie, or miſtake in wording it, ſays, Gen. xv. 18. "Unto thy ſeed have I *given* "this land." He ſent Moſes well atteſted to conduct the people into it, with the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, that he had taken it upon himſelf to put them in poſſeſſion; and ſhowed ſuch ſigns and diſplays of almighty power, as could leave no room to entertain any doubt of his being abundantly able to do what he had promiſed. And when it is further conſidered, that he had given them a body of laws which could not be put in practice until they were in poſſeſſion of the land for which theſe laws were calculated, who can doubt of their being bound to believe that God would certainly perform what he had promiſed? But they did not believe it. And when there was nothing left them to do but to go forward, they would not, becauſe they did not find themſelves able to fight and conquer thoſe who were in poſſeſſion; and, in the event, only two of all the multitude

titude were permitted to enter in; the carcaſſes of the reſt fell in the wilderneſs, becauſe they believed not God, nor truſted in his ſalvation.

Our Lord himſelf gives us another caſe, which he has declared perfectly parallel, and therefore muſt be depended on: "As "the braſen ſerpent was lifted up in the "wilderneſs, ſo ſhall the Son of man be "lifted up, that whoſoever believes on "him, ſhould not periſh, but have ever-"laſting life." He compares the promiſe of eternal life, as it ſtands annexed to the ſacrifice he has made of himſelf, to the promiſe of healing by the braſen ſerpent; and believing in him, to looking on that; as the general call ſtands directed by the prophet to all the ends of the earth to look unto him and be ſaved. Now, as none would look at the braſen ſerpent with any expectation from it, but they who believed the promiſe, (and they certainly would); ſo they who believe the promiſe of pardon and life annexed to the ſacrifice of Chriſt, will as certainly believe in him, and reſt their hearts and their hopes there. In both caſes, there is equally free acceſs for all

to whom the promiſe is ſent. But if any of the bitten Iſraelites, on any conſideration, refuſed or neglected to look, they periſhed without remedy. And who can complain, if the neglecters of Chriſt and his ſalvation periſh in the ſame manner? Will their unbelief or perverſeneſs make void the faithful promiſe? It ſtands preciſely as it did, and as it does to thoſe who believe. But if it is not believed, it can have no other effect than if it had not been made.

There was one thing I obſerved about the office of prieſthood, which it may be proper to take in here, as it effectually obviates every exception that can be made againſt the gift of pardon and life in its utmoſt extent, viz. That the prieſt by his office was bound to receive every man that came with his ſacrifice, whatever he was, or however otherwiſe qualified or diſtinguiſhed. Our great high prieſt has declared the ſame concerning himſelf, That "him that cometh to him," whoſoever he is, or whatſoever he hath done or not done, "he will in no wiſe caſt out." Nay, and that he ſtands bound by the commandment of the Father to give him eternal

eternal life. The gift indeed, by the very terms of the grant, and the only way in which life is or can be conveyed to any of Adam's race, is ſo confined to Jeſus Chriſt, that "he that hath the Son, hath life; "and he that hath not the Son, hath not "life." But, at the ſame time, all things are laid ſo ready in him, that if any comes ſhort of it, it muſt be, as himſelf hath ſtated it, "becauſe they will not "come to him that they may have life."

I have ſaid nothing of the ſeveral waſhings and purifications we find ſo much and ſo minutely inſiſted on in the law of Moſes. They were very neceſſary under that diſpenſation to keep up a dutiful ſenſe of the purity and holineſs of that God with whom they had to do; for this we find given as the reaſon for what we ſhould reckon the moſt trifling of them, "that "he, JEHOVAH, their God, was among "them, and that he was holy;" and, at the ſame time, to keep them carefully upon their guard againſt that abominable thing ſin, the only real evil which he has declared his ſoul hates: and they anſwer the ſame purpoſes to us now. But we have one complete relief in the fountain

which is opened for ſin and for all uncleanneſs: "The blood of Jeſus Chriſt "cleanſeth from all ſin." And thus the Apoſtle John repreſents him as coming by water and blood, alluding probably to the blood and water which flowed from his heart pierced by the ſoldier's ſpear. This does effectually what all the legal purifications were but ſhadows of; it purgeth the conſcience from dead works; and inſtead of that ſlaviſh fear and dread which an evil conſcience naturally produces, gives the vileſt ſinner boldneſs and confidence to enter into the holieſt, by that new and living way which our great high prieſt has conſecrated through the vail of his own fleſh.

CHAP. VIII.

Adminiſtration and diſcharge of Chriſt's office towards Sinners.

THE foundations of the Chriſtian's faith and hope appear laid ſo ſtrong in the ſacrifice of our great high prieſt, and the full and comprehenſive promiſe of pardon and

and life annexed to it, that one would think none who has any knowledge of it ſhould need the Apoſtle's exhortation, " to draw " near with a true heart, and in full aſ- " ſurance of faith and hope, when they " have their hearts ſprinkled from an e- " vil conſcience." And truly all the diſ- couragements a ſerious perſon can poſſibly meet with are ſo abundantly provided a- gainſt in Jeſus Chriſt, that whatever diffi- culties ariſe in the way of believing, muſt flow from partial or miſtaken views, ei- ther of the prieſt, or his ſacrifice, (and commonly both go together); or from miſtaking the import and meaning of the grant and promiſe annexed to the ſacri- fice.

I believe they may be all reduced to two; felt unworthineſs, and weakneſs; which commonly go together, and are the very ſame which betrayed the old Iſrael- ites into their unbelief. The record is ſo far from diſcouraging a ſenſe either of the one or of the other, that great pains are taken to ſtrike the feeling of them both, greatly deeper than any child of Adam would chuſe. All the accounts we have given us of the ſtate of mankind repreſent them

them not only as unworthy of any favour, and leſs than the leaſt of all mercies, but as moſt worthy of the ſevereſt puniſhment the creator can inflict upon an obſtinate rebellious creature. Our powers are repreſented every way as defective as our merit; ſo far are we from being able to fulfil any law, even when we have brought it as low as can be done with any tolerable decency, and ſubſtituted what is called ſincerity inſtead of perfection, that we are aſſured we cannot receive, nor even know the things of God; and if ſo, how can we either repent or reform to any purpoſe? Our Lord hath aſſured us in expreſs terms, that faith is ſo much the gift of God, that "no man can come to "him unleſs the Father draw him:" nay, that without him, his beſt diſciples can do nothing. The Apoſtle Paul, who was undoubtedly one of the moſt eminent of them, ſets his ſeal to this, acknowledging, that he and his fellow-apoſtles were not ſufficient of themſelves ſo much as to *think* any thing as of themſelves: and what can be more expreſſive of human weakneſs than this?

But all this is no more than is abſolute-

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ly neceſſary to bring man back to his right creature-ſtate, his primitive nothingneſs, that he may acknowledge himſelf debtor to the free ſovereign grace of his creator, for all he either is, or hopes to be: A hard ſaying to the vain ſons of Adam; but an abſolutely neceſſary one; and no more than every reaſonable creature is bound to acknowledge, that the creator is abſolutely maſter of his own favours. This point the Apoſtle carries as high as it can be: "It is not of him "that willeth, nor of him that runneth, "but of God who ſheweth mercy." And again, "He has mercy on whom he will "have mercy; and whom he will he hard-"eneth." And he takes notice of the only thing that ever has, or ever can be urged againſt it, "Why doth he yet find fault?" Which he anſwers by another queſtion: "Who art thou, O man! who replieſt a-"gainſt God?" A queſtion, which, if it is ſeriouſly conſidered, will not only ſilence, but convict every child of Adam. There is a conſcience in man, in the worſt of men, that if ſuffered to bring to light what the heart is privy to, will tell him in ſtrong terms how much he deſerves to be hardened:

hardened: for God hardens none but by giving over ſtriving with them, and leaving them to be led by their own luſts. He is under no obligation to interpoſe; and if he pleaſes to extend his mercy and grace even to the moſt unworthy, none can complain of any injury done them, unleſs they have ſome merit to plead. And when any one ſhall attempt to produce any thing that he has given to God, or done for God, which he has not firſt received from him, his claim no doubt will be conſidered: but little to his advantage; for by the laws and eſtabliſhed order of the God of heaven, ſuch a claim would be found downright rebellion, an attempting to live in a way that God has not appointed.

But however mortifying the doctrine of free ſovereign grace, as the only meaſure of the divine proceedings with man, may be to the haughty reaſoners of this world, it is as encouraging to the poor creature that knows himſelf, and is ready to ſink under the terrors of divine majeſty, the ſenſe of his own vileneſs, and utter incapacity of doing any thing for relief. God has taken the ſaving of ſinners into his own

own hand; and he ſaves not by works of righteouſneſs done by us, but according to his own mercy. Mercy indeed, and immenſe riches of grace: for he has made a grant of eternal life; and that it might come by way of free gift to us, he hath had all the terms of the grant perfectly fulfilled by his own bleſſed Son; lodged all the fulneſs of life in his hand, to be conveyed to all that will be ſo far reconciled to God, as to be willing to receive it.

I obſerved, that no diſcouragement or difficulty could ariſe in the way of believing, but from miſtaking the import of the promiſe. And there is a fatal miſtake which has miſled many, and diſcouraged more, viz. That the eternal life which is in the grant, is ſomething at a great diſtance, and that there is a long and weary way to go ere we get at it; that we muſt repent of our ſins, and forſake them, believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, mortify the fleſh, with the luſts and affections of it, and lead holy and devout lives; and that all theſe are but the means in the uſe of which we attain the promiſed life, and the way that leads to it. And a weary

way it would be indeed, if that was the caſe. But bleſſed be God it is not. So far from it, that all theſe are but the conſequences, the exerciſes, and actings of that new life which the dead ſinner receives from Jeſus Chriſt, before there is any ſuch thing as a good motion in the heart; and which is gradually carried on, until the Chriſtian attains the end of his faith and hope, in a perfect likeneſs to the glorious pattern, the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. To ſatisfy us fully in this, we need no more but obſerve how the conſequences of our great high prieſt's fulfilling the terms of life, and having the fulneſs of it lodged in his hand, are ſtated in the record which God has made concerning him.

I need not obſerve the immediate conſequence of his ſacrifice, the perfect right which we may ſay he acquired; and acquired not for himſelf, any more than he died for himſelf, but for thoſe for whom he died, or ſuch as are intereſted in the ſacrifice. To find out who theſe are, we need not go ſo far back as to God's eternal counſels and decree of election, nor even to Chriſt's intention with regard to the particular

particular perſons who ſhould receive the benefit of his ſacrifice: for though it is certainly true, that all who ever had, or ever ſhall have, any intereſt in that ſacrifice, were choſen from eternity, and given to the Son, (and in theſe terms Chriſt ſpeaks to his heavenly Father, becauſe both underſtood them perfectly); yet that is what no mortal can know, but by the event. We need no more but take things as he has laid them before us, and do as the old Iſraelites did; that is, believing the truth of the ſacrifice, and of the grant of pardon and life affixed to it, reſt our hearts and our hopes upon the faithfulneſs of him who hath promiſed, and ſealed his promiſe by ſuch a token of his unchangeable fidelity, as giving his own Son a ſacrifice for the putting away of ſin. By virtue of this gift and promiſe, the vileſt ſinner has as good a right to eternal life, as ever Adam could have had to his life by the moſt perfect and ſinleſs obedience; and ſo much better and ſurer, as it is Chriſt's right which the believer holds by. And thus the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is the believer's in the very nature of the thing, as the very deſign of his obedience

was to make out a right for him, and to ſeal it by his death. And thus we ſee very plainly how God could juſtify the ungodly, and be very juſt and righteous in doing ſo; inſomuch that another apoſtle makes it not only a point of faithfulneſs, but even of juſtice, to forgive ſin: "If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful "and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to "cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs."

Confeſſion of ſin, we obſerved, was the firſt thing the tranſgreſſor of Moſes's law did when he brought his ſacrifice to the prieſt; and that was a plain acknowledgement of the forfeiture. From that time, he held what remained of his life, not by his former innocence, or any good deeds he had done, but purely in the virtue of the ſacrifice, and the new grant of life annexed to it in the pardon of his ſin. We are now freed from the expence and trouble of the ſacrifice: God hath prepared one for all. But we cannot enter upon it, but by confeſſing over it, as the Jews did of old, and thus formally renouncing all pretenſions to live in any other way, than in virtue of this ſacrifice, and the grant of grace in Chriſt Jeſus; or,

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in other words, by taking up our croſs, and following him through death, to be planted into the likeneſs of his reſurrection, living by that life which is lodged in his hand, and which he, by the place which he holds, ſtands bound to communicate to us.

On this foundation the Apoſtle John builds the account he gives of God; very different indeed from what an evil conſcience and our imperfect views of his ways with men preſent him to us: he ſaith, and repeats it for our greater aſſurance, "That God is love." This includes more than can be expreſſed in any other terms: it imports, that love is his very eſſence and nature; and he proves it by the love he has ſhown to the world, in giving his Son unto the death; as it was impoſſible to have loved them in any degree, if love had not been his very nature. No man, I may add, no creature, can love, but where he either ſees or imagines ſome amiable quality in the object; (which, I ſuppoſe, has led ſo many to think that they muſt poſſeſs ſuch qualities in order to recommend them to the divine favour): but God never beheld any thing lovely until

until he made it ſo; and he can make any object lovely that he pleaſes to ſet his love upon. "Herein is love, not that we lo-"ved God;" ſo far from it, that we were enemies in our minds through wicked works; and this enmity was ſo deeply rooted, that nothing could have reconciled the heart to him, but "that he loved "us, and gave his only beloved Son to "the death, that we might live through "him;" the ſureſt pledge that could have been given, that "with him he cer-"tainly will give us all things." And indeed in giving his Son, he really gives us all things: "For in him dwells all the "fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." "And "it is given to him, to the man Jeſus the "Mediator, to have all the fulneſs of life "in himſelf, even as the Father hath." And conſequently, when he is given, all the fulneſs of life is in truth given alſo.

Life, we had occaſion to obſerve, is ſuch a myſterious thing, that there is no way of accounting even for the continuation of it, but by the energy of almighty power: A power which is always exerted by that divine agent which bears the name of *Spirit*. The word, it is true, is va-

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riouſly uſed: ſometimes it denotes created ſpirits, ſometimes the temper and diſpoſition of ſpirit in man, and ſometimes the goſpel of Chriſt, which is the ſpirit of the law, and the means of conveying the Spirit of life. But the epithet of *Holy*, or *the Spirit of God*, or of *the Lord Chriſt*, are never applied to any created thing. This is that Comforter, or Advocate, whom our Lord promiſed to ſend to his diſciples, when they were overwhelmed with grief on the proſpect of his departing from them: An event which, he aſſured them, was greatly for their intereſt; becauſe that Comforter, who would be of more advantage to them than his preſence with them, could not be given, until he ſhould be admitted into the true holieſt, as the high prieſt was into the figure; and there enter upon the finiſhing part of his office, viz. bleſſing the people. But now, being ſet down with the Father on his throne, the prieſt and the king are united with the prophet, his ſtanding character; and he is veſted with all power and authority to bleſs effectually; that is, to put forth all divine power for raiſing the dead ſinners of Adam's race to a new and never-

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ending life, by this Holy Spirit whom he promiſed to ſend.

This promiſe was punctually fulfilled to the apoſtles in a manner that filled all who were witneſſes to it with the greateſt aſtoniſhment. But it is not to be ſo underſtood as if the ſame Spirit had never been ſent before, and ceaſed when that firſt period was over. The Apoſtle Peter aſſures us, that it was the ſame Spirit which ſpoke in the prophets: "The Spirit "of Chriſt teſtified in them." And the promiſe, we are ſure, extends to the end of the world. Our Lord put that out of doubt, when he ſtood, and cried, "He "that believes on me, out of his belly ſhall "flow rivers of living water;" which the Evangeliſt tells us, he ſpake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive. There is indeed a great diverſity of gifts, ſuited to different times and occaſions. But one Spirit is the author of all, who divideth unto every one ſeverally as he will, and in what manner he pleaſeth, either more ſenſibly and perceptibly, as in the apoſtolic times, or in a more ſpiritual, and conſequently imperceptible way; as our Lord ſays of the wind which bloweth

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where it liſteth; which laſt, notwithſtanding, is as real as the former, and produces the ſame effects in the hearts and ſpirits of men.

The office of this Spirit, as our Lord ſtates it, is very extenſive, and carries all the bleſſings in it which he has to beſtow upon his diſciples: for he ſays, "He ſhall take of "mine, and ſhew it unto you." And leſt any ſhould imagine that the word *mine* implied ſome reſerve, he adds, "All things "that the Father hath, are mine." And thus the Spirit's buſineſs muſt be, to ſhew them all that God has to give. And theſe things he ſhews not merely to look at, (that would be a torture inſtead of a bleſſing), but to put us in poſſeſſion of them, ſo far as we are capable of receiving them. And thus, when our exalted high prieſt ſends his Holy Spirit, he bleſſes us effectually with all ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings. And accordingly we find him ſet forth to our faith by ſuch titles as import all that we can have any occaſion for, in order to raiſe us to the higheſt meaſure both of perfection and happineſs, in a perfect conformity unto our glorious head; that as we have born the image of

the earthy man, we may alſo bear the image of the heavenly.

The firſt bleſſing a dead ſinner needs, muſt be life; for that is the ground-work of all activity and enjoyment. It ſtands in the grant annexed to the ſacrifice; on the finiſhing and acceptance whereof, the fulneſs of life is lodged in the high prieſt's hand to bleſs all with, who, renouncing every other dependence, have recourſe unto the ſacrifice alone. But even this the dead ſinner neither can nor will do, until he is bleſſed with the quickening Spirit. And yet, as things ſtand, he that hears the goſpel is left abſolutely inexcuſable: for he certainly can be ſenſible of his inability and perverſeneſs; he can hear the report; and what can hinder him to cry to him, who has declared he will not, nay, and may not, caſt out any that come to him? And words cannot be more expreſs than the aſſurance he has given, that "his heavenly Father will certainly "give his Holy Spirit to thoſe that aſk "him." Memorable are his words to the woman of Samaria: "If thou kneweſt the "gift of God, and who it is that aſketh "thee, thou wouldſt have aſked of him, "and

" and he would have given thee living " water." " Aſk, and ye ſhall receive," runs through the whole record. And ſurely thoſe who will not aſk, have no reaſon to complain if they want through their own perverſeneſs.

Accordingly the firſt and leading title given to the Spirit of Chriſt is, *The Spirit of Life*. And he is ſo in two eminent reſpects, which take in the whole of his work in this view: firſt, as he unites to the fountain of life; and, ſecondly, as he is the means of conveyance by which it is derived for quickening the dead ſinner, and maintaining and ſupporting his life through all the intermediate ſtages of it, until it arrive at full perfection.

Much has been ſaid about the believer's union with Chriſt. The Apoſtle has eſtabliſhed the neceſſity of it: " Search," ſaith he, " and try yourſelves; know ye not " your own ſelves, how that Chriſt is in " you, unleſs ye be reprobates?" I ſuſpect its being called, as it is commonly, the *myſtical* union, may have prejudiced ſome ſo far as to dwindle it away into a political or moral union: I only ſay, that thoſe who do ſo, can expect no more but

a political or moral influence from Chriſt the head. The record carries it greatly further, and pitches upon the neareſt, cloſeſt, and moſt vital unions known among men as models of it. But all fall ſhort of what the Apoſtle gives us in one word: "He that is joined to the Lord, is "one ſpirit." And thence I would chuſe to call it a *ſpiritual* union: the ſame Spirit which dwells in the Mediator Jeſus, and which he receives not by meaſure, that anointing, whence he takes his title of *the Meſſiah*, or *the Chriſt*, dwells and abides in them. So the Apoſtle John repreſents the unction which he aſcribes to every Chriſtian, as producing the ſame effects which our Lord aſcribes to the Holy Spirit.

And as he is thus the great, and, properly ſpeaking, the only bond of union between Chriſt and the Chriſtian; ſo he muſt be the only medium by which the life is conveyed. This muſt be an inexplicable ſecret. But we are helped to the conception of it by the method which he who underſtood it perfectly, took to explain it to Nicodemus, comparing it to the firſt, which we call the *natural birth*:

"Except

" Except a man be born again, of wa-
" ter, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter
" into the kingdom of God." And accordingly there is a new creature produced, as different from that which is produced in the firſt birth, as ſpirit is from fleſh: " That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; " that which is born of the Spirit, is ſpi-
" rit." The Evangeliſt John gives juſt ſuch another deſcription of the ſons of God; that " they are born, not of blood, " nor of the will of the fleſh, nor even of " the will of man, but of God." As no body refuſes the interpoſal of real creating power in the firſt birth, why ſhould the expreſs aſſertions in the record be brought down to mere figure and metaphor in the ſecond? Nicodemus's objection, " How can theſe things be?" is all that can be ſaid againſt it: and that will appear a very fooliſh one to thoſe who acknowledge any creation at all.

But the Spirit of Chriſt is not given merely as a tranſient agent, to make the new creature, and then leave it to itſelf. That is what the creator never did with any of his works; and the new creature, ſpirit as it is, is no more capable of ſelf-ſubſiſtence than

than any of the old creatures. The Spirit is therefore ſent to abide with them for ever, to be the very principle of life in them. And this is the great diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the Chriſtian life, which makes it of a quite different kind from all others whatſoever. For thus real Chriſtians live by that very life which Chriſt himſelf lives by, and as we find the Apoſtle Paul deſcribing it, who certainly underſtood it well: "It is not ſo much "the man that lives, as it is Chriſt that "lives in him." And therefore it is unto him, or, which is the ſame thing, to the grace of God, that he aſcribes all the good that ever he was enabled to do: "Not I," ſaid he, "but the grace of God which "was in me." To him therefore he gives the glory of all.

And hence it is that we find, not only the life of the Chriſtian, but all the powers of the new ſpiritual life, attributed to this ſame Spirit; and ſuitable titles are given him correſponding to theſe powers. Thus, for inſtance, he is ſtyled, "the Spirit of "truth;" and his buſineſs is, "to lead "men into all truth;" "The ſpirit of wiſ-"dom and underſtanding; The giver of "under-

" underſtanding to know the things free-
" ly given of God." And as he ſearches
" all things, even the deep things of
" God;" ſo our Lord and his apoſtles ſay, that " he teacheth all things, and " brings all things to the remembrance " of his people," as they have occaſion for them. He is likewiſe ſtyled *a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication*, both for inſtructing in what is fit and proper to aſk, and giving confidence and boldneſs to enter into the holieſt; to the very throne of grace, where mercy, and grace to help in every time of need, wait their acceptance. " Ho, " every one that thirſteth," &c. is the voice of the Spirit. And not to inſiſt further on ſuch a copious ſubject, to him is committed the perfecting of the ſaints, and providing all that is neceſſary for that purpoſe; and, in one word, to " keep them " by the mighty power of God, through " faith unto ſalvation." So that, upon the whole, where Chriſt is given, the Holy Spirit is given to every one that will aſk him in the faith of the promiſe as it ſtands in Chriſt: and where eternal life is given in its full extent, all that is neceſſary to the beginning, preſerving,

and

and continuing the ſpiritual life, is given alſo, till it ſhall attain its full perfection in the glory and happineſs of the world to come; to which the great God, and our Saviour, ſhall finally bring all that have believed in his name. Upon the whole, then, the option ſtands thus: Whether ſhall we content ourſelves with that pitiful periſhing life we have from Adam, and take our venture of that everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, which ſhall be the portion of thoſe who reject the Saviour? or, ſhall we finally renounce and give up with a preſent life, and all that belongs to it, in the faith and hope of that eternal life which is held forth and preſſed upon us in the goſpel of Chriſt? An option this, about which one ſhould think no man in his ſober ſenſes could deliberate a moment; but that every one ſhould chearfully, and without heſitation, deny himſelf, take up his croſs, the inſtrument of death, and follow Chriſt.

And hence we may eaſily ſee what that goſpel-holineſs, or ſanctification, is, which comprehends the whole work of the Spirit, and has been, and yet is, moſt miſerably

ſerably miſtaken by numbers of thoſe who are called Chriſtians; and perhaps by ſome who are really ſo. The name is taken from the Old-Teſtament writings, and the ſhadow and figure of it under that diſpenſation: and thence we muſt form our conceptions of it, if we propoſe to anſwer the New-Teſtament account of it, which is all formed upon that plan. There we find all the congregation of Iſrael were holy, the Levites more ſo, the prieſts yet more than the common Levites, and the high prieſt in a peculiar manner ſanctified and made holy unto the Lord. I do not mention this as if I thought there was to be any ſuch diſtinction among Chriſtians: indeed the caſe will not admit of it; for there is one great high prieſt, the head of the body, the church; and all thoſe whom he has loved, ſo as to waſh them from their ſins in his own blood, are made kings and prieſts unto God; or, as the Apoſtle calls them, *a royal prieſthood:* but I do it to give us a more diſtinct view of the thing, in thoſe ſeveral lights in which it ſtands, and in what was common to them all.

There are theſe four things which we

find in them all, which ſeem to comprehend the whole of that ſanctification we have in view to deſcribe.

1. A ſeparation from the profane community in which they were naturally lying, without any difference at all between them and the reſt of mankind. Nay, we find God himſelf declaring, when he choſe the Iſraelites, that they were the feweſt, and the moſt perverſe of all people. And it is to be obſerved, that from this ſeparation, the name of ſanctification is taken in the original language, which is the foundation of all the reſt.

2. Waſhing, purifying, and cleanſing thoſe who were thus ſeparated, from the defilement and pollution which they either had naturally, or had contracted in their common ſtate. And here it is to be obſerved, that the foundation of all this was laid in the blood of the ſacrifices, and performed by the application of that blood, in ſome ſhape or other, to the perſon who was to be ſanctified. So that indeed there could be as little purification as remiſſion, without ſhedding of blood.

3. The perſons thus ſeparated and cleanſed were ſolemnly devoted and ſet apart to God

God for that particular ſtation to which they were ſeparated, and the ſervice and buſineſs which belonged to it. And,

4. They were provided in ſuch gifts and powers as he who appointed them ſaw neceſſary for their reſpective offices. I have put both theſe together; becauſe their anointing to the office, at once conſecrated or ſet them apart for it, and gave them full power and authority to do every thing that belonged to it, which no other might with ſafety uſurp in any degree; as King Uzziah, mighty as he was, felt to his coſt; and as the anointing with oil was a ſymbol and ſign of the true anointing, thence their powers and abilities were derived.

Theſe are all ſo eaſily applied to the true ſanctification by the blood and Spirit of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that it is needleſs to ſpend words upon the illuſtration of it. It may ſuffice to obſerve, how prepoſterous, and ſomething worſe, all the attempts of men are, to ſanctify themſelves, or make themſelves holy, by any other means, or upon any other motives and views, than the great ſacrifice and unction which our bleſſed Redeemer hath provided for his followers;

and, at the ſame time, how fooliſh the objection is, which has ever ſince the Apoſtle's days been urged with much vehemence againſt the doctrine of grace, and the free juſtification of ſinners, or, which is the ſame thing, pardoning ſin, and making a free gift of eternal life in Chriſt, as if it gave an encouragement to ſin, and weakened the obligations to holineſs. The Apoſtle gave the true anſwer, That the thing was impoſſible: "They could not "continue in ſin, becauſe they were dead "to it;" dead and buried with Chriſt to a preſent world, and a preſent life; and conſequently dead to all the temptations to ſin, but alive unto God by Jeſus Chriſt; inſomuch that the Apoſtle John ſcruples not to ſay, that "they cannot ſin, becauſe "they are born of God, and the ſeed of "God abideth in them." And ſurely they that live in the Spirit, muſt walk in the Spirit, or as they are led by the Spirit. Memorable are the words of the Apoſtle John: "He that ſaith he abideth in "Chriſt, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk e-"ven as he walked." And by the ſame rule, he that really abides in Chriſt, will certainly do ſo; for whoſoever hath this hope

hope in him, the hope of being made like unto Chriſt, cannot but purify himſelf, even as he is pure. The love of Chriſt conſtrains him; and that is a conſtraint incomparably more effectual than all the laws and ſanctions man could ever deviſe. Nay, without this conſtraint, all the motives and arguments from any other topics will go for nothing whenever a temptation comes, as ſad experience ſufficiently verifies in numberleſs inſtances.

CHAP. IX.

Concluſions.

UPon the whole, then, and after the moſt critical review of the ways of God with man, it muſt appear, that the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt is the moſt perfect demonſtration of the Apoſtle's propoſition, "That God is love;" and that in the revelation of the love of God to mankind, every fact we have atteſted in the record, every ſtep that we find the creator has taken, carries in it not only further and further diſcoveries of his glory, but likewiſe that he has pitched his glory on this particular

particular point, " peace and good-will " toward men on earth." How unlike is this to the dreadful image the father of lies hath forged, to frighten men away from him; and which an evil conſcience hath improved into ſlaviſh terrors of his majeſty and greatneſs, purity and holineſs, and rigid juſtice; as if nothing were to be expected from him but the vengeance of a provoked enemy, who, at beſt, is ſo tenacious of his favours, that nothing can be obtained, but what is in a manner extorted from him by the complete ſatisfaction made by Jeſus Chriſt. Little wonder it ſhould be found very hard, I may ſay impoſſible, to reconcile the heart of a ſinner to ſuch a God.

To effect this reconciliation, the Apoſtle tells us, was the great deſign of the goſpel-record, viz. That " God was in " Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, " not imputing their treſpaſſes unto " them." For this end did God commit the miniſtry of reconciliation to certain perſons, choſen for the purpoſe, to pray and intreat thoughtleſs man to be reconciled to him; which was the ſame thing as if God himſelf, and his bleſſed Son in perſon,

perſon, did thus pray and intreat them. And in very deed there lies the only obſtacle in the way of ſalvation; not that God is unwilling to be reconciled to men, but that they will not be reconciled to him. And the Apoſtle John gives us the only way in which that can be remedied; the way in which he and his fellow-Chriſtians were reconciled: "We love him," ſays he, "becauſe he firſt loved us." And until the love of God is known, and believed, all pains taken to effect a reconciliation will never prevail. God muſt appear amiable and lovely, otherwiſe we can never love him; and nothing but his love, and a full belief of it, can make him appear ſo. And ſurely we may ſay, with the beſt aſſurance, that there never was, nor can be, another lover who either did or could demonſtrate the greatneſs and ſincerity of his love by ſuch authentic proofs and documents.

It is really aſtoniſhing, that the grace ſhown in the firſt creation, the continued exertions of ſupporting power, and the proviſion made for man in the courſe of what is called common providence, ſhould be ſo little minded. Nothing but

a ſecret heart-atheiſm can account for it, or draw off the heart of a creature from the ſenſe of its dependence, its abſolute dependence, on the free and ſovereign grace of the creator. He has taken the moſt effectual meaſures for aſſerting the glory of his ſovereignty, and reducing his thoughtleſs creatures to their right creature-ſtate; which is, to live entirely by his grace. In the firſt man he gave a fair ſenſible repreſentation of the happineſs of mankind in that way. By fixing the ſtate of mankind as it now is, he reduced them to a ſenſible neceſſity, of either periſhing, or of owing all to ſovereign grace; and he has ſet that in ſuch an alluring light, that none can perceive it, without acknowledging the happineſs of thoſe who are admitted to live in this way. Balaam's wiſh is a very common one.

But when the great ſovereign of heaven and earth condeſcended to unite himſelf to us, as he has done in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, it was much, and infinitely more, than could be expected, that he ſhould publiſh an act of grace, forgiving iniquities, tranſgreſſions, and ſins. But when to this act of grace he hath

hath ſuperadded a grant of eternal life, and actually lodged it in the hands of his Son, where he knew it muſt be ſafe; and when he ſpared not even him, but ſent him into the world to lay down the life he had taken up among Adam's children; that the ſame ſacrifice by which ſin was condemned in his fleſh, might carry in it the ſtrongeſt aſſurance God could give of pardon and life; what ſhall we ſay of ſuch a ſacrifice? was it deſigned to reconcile God to man, or to teſtify the truth and greatneſs of his love to them?

And yet the way he has choſen to convey the benefit of this grant, carries it yet further. It was much that ſinners ſhould be juſtified freely by his grace, from all things from which they could never have been juſtified, either by the law of Moſes, or any other law that could be imagined; eſpecially when a perfect right to life was made out for them, without any pain or labour of theirs: but, as if that had been a ſmall matter, and below the dignity of his love, he has choſen to make the conveyance by an act of adoption, inveſting them not only with the rank and dignity, but with all the rights and privileges of ſons

and heirs. This was ſuch an effort of love, that the Apoſtle John, with all his ſkill in language, could not find a word to expreſs it by: he therefore only appeals to the effect of it, and ſays, "Behold, what manner of love the Father "hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould "be called the ſons of God."

But neither doth the love of God ſtop here: As it was ſingular in its nature, it was fit it ſhould be ſo in all its effects and iſſues. Becauſe man can adopt and bring in a ſtranger to be heir to his petty inheritance, he would do what no man, what no creature could do: He would not only give the title and the rights of ſons, but would make them really ſo; which he has done in the moſt effectual manner, by giving the Spirit of his Son to dwell and abide in them for ever, and to form their hearts into the ſpirit and temper of beloved children, to cry, "Abba, Father." And becauſe he knows their childiſh folly, how eaſily they are impoſed on and miſled, he has put them under the care of one who is every way his perfect image, but eſpecially in the tenderneſs of love, kindneſs, and compaſſion, viz. his own

bleſſed

bleſſed Son; and of that Spirit he has given to dwell and abide in them, with all the mighty power of God: ſo that it is utterly impoſſible for all the power of men and devils to pluck them out of his hand.

What pity is it, that all this love, ſo wonderful in itſelf, ſhould be loſt? and loſt it will be to us, as if it had never been, unleſs it is known, and believed. And hence faith comes to be the firſt duty, and the foundation on which the whole of duty ſtands. Where this is, all the commandments of God appear not only not grievous, but eaſy, pleaſant, and delightful: for indeed they are all of them dictated by perfect diſintereſted love, purely for the benefit and advantage of thoſe to whom they are given. But where the love of God is not known, and firmly believed, they are not only grievous, but indeed impoſſible to be obeyed. The Apoſtle John lets us into the ſecret of this ſeeming paradox. So long as the love of the world rules in the heart, the ways of God muſt be inſupportable; and nothing can turn out the love of the world, but the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart. This is the proper buſineſs of faith; and

thus it is the victory which overcomes the world.

When one has ſaid, that the faith or believing ſo much ſpoken of in the record, and which bears ſuch weight in the Chriſtian life, is the very ſame which is ſo well known in common life, he has ſaid all that can be ſaid for clearing the nature of it. The meaneſt peaſant knows better what it is to believe, than the moſt learned philoſopher can define it. It can be known only by experience. It is an inward ſenſe, which none can know any thing of, but they who feel it; and never was any man at a loſs to know when he believed, and when not, unleſs he had been ſome how carried out of the plain natural road, and made to imagine that faith is ſomething he knows not what, nor how it is to be performed.

What the Chriſtian is called to believe? is another queſtion, and a very proper one. And the anſwer is obvious: It is the record of God; or, what we were juſt now obſerving, is in a ſpecial manner the reſult of the whole, viz. "That God is "love," or the love that God hath to us. This gives occaſion to another very proper que-

queſtion, How do we, or how ſhall we know that? And the anſwer is as obvious: By the evidences he has given of his love in the facts we have recorded, and by his ways with mankind there ſet before us; the very ſame way by which we know and believe the love which men have to us. I have marked out the principal ones, the great lines, ſo to ſpeak: but there are a great number of ſubordinate ones, viz. his ways with particular men in particular caſes; which ſome call trifling, and below the dignity of hiſtory. But the record is not made to give a hiſtory of men, or of the affairs of this world; but to reveal the creator of it, and to lead us into ſuch views of him as may reconcile us to him, and endear him to us.

And therefore it muſt be obſerved, that the facts recorded there are not matters of pure ſpeculation, for the improvement of our minds, but benefactions and promiſes, which demand ſuitable acknowledgements for the benefits already received, and dependence on the promiſer's faithfulneſs for what is further promiſed. This is well known among men by the terms of *truſting* and *depending* on one another's word.

word. And to talk of believing a promiſe which does not imply this, is really talking contradictions; and to ſay we believe the promiſe perfectly, while we entertain any doubt or wavering about the performance of it, is very little better. Juſt ſo much full aſſurance as there is of the truth and faithfulneſs of the promiſe, ſo much aſſured confidence will there be in God; and ſo much as there is of this confidence, ſo much faith, and no more. So that there can hardly be a groſſer miſtake than what many indulge themſelves in, That their want of aſſurance is their unhappineſs, but not their ſin. Juſt ſo much of doubting as there is mixed with faith, ſo much is there of unbelief; and in proportion to that, ſo much there is of ſuſpicion and jealouſy, that God may be a liar, or at leaſt that his faithfulneſs may fail, which is nearly allied to it.

It is further to be obſerved, that whatever indignities of this kind are offered to the God of truth, they always in the end recoil upon ourſelves. Whatever jealouſies, fears, and miſgivings of heart, are ſuffered to mix with our faith, they ſo far weaken our knowledge and belief of the love

love of God to us; and conſequently ſo far break the force of the impreſſions it would otherwiſe make upon our hearts, and deaden our acknowledgements and returns of love to him, which it is in the very nature and intention of faith to make ſo deep and ſtrong, as to form the heart; that is, the inward ſentiments and feeling of the ſoul upon it; to plant the love of God there, and to make it the ruling principle, which, according to the meaſure of its perfection and ſtrength, forms all the affections and paſſions, and, of courſe, the whole converſation, into a conformity and ſuitableneſs unto the goſpel of Chriſt.

And thus it is that faith becomes the victory which overcometh the world, as it diſcovers the vanity and emptineſs of it, which can never be fully perceived, but in the light of the glory of God ſhining in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. The love of God, and the love of the world, can by no means ſtand together in the ſame heart, any more than one man can ſerve two maſters. And even in this light, love may juſtly be ſaid to be the fulfilling of the whole law, as it effectually deſtroys the root

root from which all ſin ſprings, and breaks the force of every temptation, which are all taken from a preſent world; and particularly all thoſe ſeparate intereſts which make men hateful to, and hating one another, and are the fund and fuel of all the evil and miſchief which is or can be in the world. Where the love of God rules in the heart, it natively extends itſelf to every perſon and thing that has any relation to him. The man muſt, if he acts in character, walk in love, as Chriſt alſo loved us, and gave himſelf for us. And on this it is that the commandment of loving and bleſſing our enemies is moſt ſtrongly founded.

But there is another light in which it is yet more directly the fulfilling of the law, viz. That all the duties we owe, to God, to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, are included in it; for the duties to each of them are as diſtinct as they are from one another. In ſhort, whatever duties we owe either to God or our neighbour, are no more but the native actings and exerciſes of love; which, where-ever it is in ſincerity, would certainly exert itſelf in that preciſe manner which

which the commandments of God direct and bind us to.

And thus we may see what reason the Apostle had to say, that "in Christ Jesus "neither circumcision avails any thing, "nor uncircumcision; but faith, which "works by love." Faith leads the way; and by taking in the views we have given us of the love of God in Christ, first works love, and then works by it. These two make up the sum-total of the Christian life. And, which is very remarkable, neither of them is in our own power. We can neither believe, nor disbelieve, what we will, or when we will, but as the evidence constrains us to the one or the other. And as little can we love or hate, but as the object appears amiable, or otherwise. The Apostle states the Christian life as it is: "We all with open face, be-"holding as in a glass the glory of the "Lord, are changed into the same image, "from glory to glory, even as by the "Spirit of the Lord." If any shall ask, how we come by the sight of this glory? our Lord tells us, it is by the manifestation he makes of himself; and that he does it in a way which the world neither

do nor can perceive: "God, who com-
"manded the light to ſhine out of dark-
"neſs, ſhines into the heart, to give the
"light of the knowledge of the glory of
"God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt." And, upon the whole, the life which the right Chriſtian lives in the fleſh, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himſelf for him.

The Chriſtian's life lies wholly in Chriſt; it is by faith in him that he lives: and thence it is that he ſets forth himſelf ſo warmly to the Jews at Capernaum, as the bread of life, the proper food and nouriſhment of the ſpiritual life, and the only way in which a Chriſtian can live. It is the way, the only way, which God has appointed; and therefore the only way which he will bleſs. To attempt to live in any other manner, (as many ſuch are made), is really to attempt to live whether God will or not. All the life, and all the powers of life, that God ever deſigned for any of mankind, are lodged in his Son's hand: and thence the Chriſtian muſt have his daily portion and ſupply. It is not in any natural or acquired perfection, nor even in any or all the gifts of grace they have

have received, or may receive, that his ſtrength lies; but in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus: and however weak and inſufficient he is in himſelf for any thing, he can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening him.

This grand truth the Apoſtle Paul was taught by our Lord himſelf on a particular occaſion: "My grace," ſaid he, "is "ſufficient for thee;" which produced what appears a great paradox in principle, That "when he was weak, then he was "ſtrong;" and another as great in practice, to glory or boaſt of his weakneſſes and infirmities: but both founded in ſolid wiſdom; becauſe Chriſt's ſtrength is perfected in weakneſs; and thence ariſes his glory. And thence this gives riſe to another ſeeming paradox of the ſame kind, viz. That to a right Chriſtian no duty is either more eaſy or more difficult than another. As he is in himſelf, and by the ſtate of his own powers, he is no match for the eaſieſt duty; for our Lord has ſaid, "Without me ye can "do nothing:" but to the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, and the ſtrength derived from him, all duties are equally eaſy.

I conclude with juſt obſerving, That where the foundations are thus laid in Chriſt, and the ſoul rooted in him by faith and love, there needs to be little anxiety about being built up in him in all the exerciſes of holineſs and good works. The man that abides in him, he himſelf hath aſſured us, ſhall bear much fruit. The great deceiver knows this well; and therefore his main attempts have ever been made to draw off the Chriſtian from his ſtrength, and then he is ſure to have him at his will. If the Chriſtian is wiſe, his attention will be conſtantly fixed on this capital point, on which all depends. The Apoſtle John's direction was dictated by the trueſt wiſdom: "And now, little chil-
" dren, abide in him; that when he ſhall
" appear, we may have confidence, and
" not be aſhamed before him at his co-
" ming."

The

The CHRISTIAN LIFE;

OR,

DISSERTATIONS on Galatians ii. 20.

I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is with peculiar ſignificancy that the kingdom of our Lord, and the things pertaining to it, are ſo often called a *myſtery* by Chriſt and his apoſtles; not indeed in the ſenſe which ſome have affixed to that word, as if a myſtery were a thing altogether unintelligible; but as denoting ſomething ſo ſecret and hidden, that the men of the world, the wiſeſt not excepted, know not what to make of it: and the propriety of the expreſſion, when applied to the goſpel in this its genuine meaning, is too fully illuſtrated, by the treatment which

which the goſpel hath met with in the world. How generally has it been rejected, not only by the ignorant bigotted vulgar, but even by thoſe who have been reckoned the moſt learned and wiſe? And among thoſe who profeſs their belief of the goſpel in general, how few receive it, until they have moulded it into a ſuitableneſs unto their own preconceived notions and apprehenſions? Whence has ariſen that multitude of ſects and parties, each of them having a peculiar ſcheme of Chriſtianity, which yet they all pretend to found upon the ſame authority.

There is indeed a myſtery in the kingdom of heaven, and the whole conduct of it. It is itſelf a ſecret of ſuch a nature, that the wiſdom of man, improved to the higheſt poſſible pitch, could never have diſcovered it: and when it is brought to light, as it is in the goſpel, it continues a ſecret in a great meaſure to all that know it only by report and hearſay. Chriſt's kingdom is not of this world: it belongs to another, a ſpiritual and inviſible one, which can never be brought under ſenſible obſervation; the inhabitants whereof are all of the ſame nature. The ſouls of men

are

are the only part of them capable of any correſpondence with that ſpiritual world: and buried as theſe at preſent are in fleſh, ſtrongly connected with this material world, and formed upon the ſtate and appearance of things here, they are extremely unfit for it in all reſpects.

It is this which makes the accounts of that world, and the way of living which belongs to it, even when conceived in the moſt proper and expreſſive terms, appear a myſtery, a perfect riddle, to the inhabitants of this earth; as they can affix no meaning to theſe terms, until they have adjuſted them to their conceptions, as metaphors and bold figures; by which means, they all may be, and often have been, explained away, not only into another meaning, but one directly contrary to the plain import of the words. And to give a colour to this ſhameful licence, we are told ſtrange ſtories of the extravagancies of the eaſtern languages, as ſo overrun with hyperbolical affectations, that nothing can be made of them, until they are brought down to common ſenſe and plain expreſſion: Language, one ſhould think, not very reſpectful to the divine

wiſdom,

wiſdom, which, we may ſay without offence, knew as well how to adjuſt expreſſion to the matter, as the moſt ſedate and ſagacious of our modern philoſophers.

In the account the Apoſtle Paul here gives of himſelf to the Galatians, where he intends to ſet before them a ſtate of the Chriſtian life, we have one of the moſt eminent inſtances of that myſterious way of ſpeaking. That Apoſtle, we are ſure, was able to ſpeak as intelligibly as any man ever was; and in ordinary caſes, evidently did ſo. Nay, he values himſelf upon it; and even boaſts of his uſing great plainneſs of ſpeech in theſe things, and ſuiting the expreſſion to the ſubject in hand; and was thought of God to do it with ſuch exactneſs, that he aſſerts with great boldneſs, That if his goſpel was hid to any, it was a ſure ſign that the god of this world had blinded their minds to their eternal perdition, 2 Cor. iii. 12.; iv. 1. 2. 3. And yet in this one verſe he has no fewer than three expreſſions of this kind, the ſtrongeſt that are any where to be found in the Bible; ſuch only excepted as are uſed to the ſame purpoſe, and perfectly of a piece with them, by this and the

the other apoſtles, and by our Lord himſelf before them, viz. That *he was crucified with Chriſt, and yet lived*; that though *he lived, it was not he that lived, but Chriſt in him;* and though *he lived in the fleſh* to all appearance as other men do, yet in truth he lived a quite different life, *by the faith of the Son of God.*

It is not to be denied, that there are many figurative expreſſions in the ſacred writings, which it would be fooliſh and ridiculous to conſtrue in the ſenſe the words commonly bear, and which the connection and deſign will by no means admit: but beſides that this is not the caſe here, there are two things that perſuade me, that the Apoſtle is giving a plain and undiſguiſed account of the thing as it is, without any figure at all, except what the nature of his ſubject neceſſarily required, (as human language has no words to expreſs it by but ſuch as are taken from the preſent ſtate of things, and theſe ſo adjuſted, as any man of the plaineſt ſenſe may be brought to underſtand them), viz. That it is part of an epiſtle written to plain men upon a very momentous ſubject; and that where-ever the ſame ſubject is ſpoken

of, either by our Lord or his apoſtles, the ſame, or equivalent terms, are conſtantly made uſe of; inſomuch that the whole New-Teſtament language is founded thereupon.

It ſtands in an *epiſtle*; and that is allowed to be the plaineſt and moſt ſimple way of writing. This epiſtle was addreſſed, not to ſome one or more very learned men, who might be ſuppoſed to underſtand the ſubject ſo well, that the boldeſt hyperboles would direct, and could not miſlead them; but to a body of very plain men, as appears by the fooliſh miſtakes they were led into, which required yet greater plainneſs: and it ſtands as the introduction to his epiſtle, upon which he founds the whole of what he had to ſay to them, which required the greateſt clearneſs and diſtinct plainneſs that could be. The caſe was this: Some baſtard Chriſtians, Jews, who, on ſome view or other, had taken up that profeſſion, ſet up for teachers, and ſubverted the whole conſtitution of grace. For thus they taught, that notwithſtanding all that Chriſt had done, and engaged to do, unleſs a man was circumciſed after the manner of Moſes,

Moſes, he could not be ſaved. The Apoſtle, who had planted the doctrine of Chriſt among them, after a ſhort account of the truly miraculous manner in which he received his inſtructions immediately from God, without any concurrence of human teaching, and how honeſtly he had ſtood by them, when Peter diſſembled, and Barnabas was likewiſe carried away with his diſſimulation, he lays before them a ſtate of the Chriſtian life as he found it in himſelf, and knew it to be by experience, viz. That neither Jews nor Gentiles could be ſaved by the obſervation of the law, which the falſe teachers inſiſted ſo much upon; but both were obliged to have recourſe to the grace that is in Chriſt: That this is ſo far from giving any encouragement to ſin, or looſening any of the obligations to holineſs, that it is juſt the reverſe. One muſt be dead to the law before he can live unto God. This he aſſerts from his own experience, ver. 19. "I through the law am dead to the "law;" which was ſo far from being contrary to the law, that it was the very nature and intention of the law, to bind the man under death who was ſubject to

it: On which account it is elſewhere called, *the miniſtration of death:* A courſe which we are well aſſured all Chriſtians muſt paſs through, and which the Apoſtle felt in himſelf, being through the law, or by its miniſtration, brought to death: in conſequence whereof, he was dead to the law; the law had done its utmoſt, and he had no more either to hope or fear from it. See Rom. vi. 13.; vii. 1. 2. 3. &c. And becauſe it might be doubted, how he could be ſlain by the law, and dead to it, while he was really alive, he explains the myſtery of it in the words before us, That he was crucified with Chriſt, and yet lived; or rather, as the truth is, Chriſt lived in him; and though he lived in the fleſh, yet he lived not after the fleſh, but by the faith of the Son of God. And who will believe that ſuch a man as Paul would lay down a metaphor, and ſo extravagant a metaphor too, as this is by ſome ſuppoſed to be, to build a courſe of reaſoning upon in ſo ſerious a caſe? This would not be reaſoning, but a train of fooliſh and trifling puerilities, which no man of common ſenſe could fall into: and yet he aſſumes, upon the evidence, with the utmoſt

moſt confidence, that it was ſuch a degree of folly to think otherwiſe, that nothing but faſcination or witchcraft could have led the Galatians into it, ch. iii. 1.

But this is not the ſingle place where he expreſſes himſelf in this manner: his epiſtles are full of it; and indeed the whole of his reaſoning on every occaſion either expreſſes or ſuppoſes it; ſo that, to do juſtice to the argument, one would be obliged to run over in a manner all that he has written. We muſt content ourſelves with mentioning ſuch as are moſt expreſſly to the purpoſe. In his epiſtle to the Romans, he not only talks the ſame language, but repeats, opens, and explains it at large; eſpecially in the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters; where he aſſures us in plain terms, that every Chriſtian is dead to ſin, baptized into the death of Chriſt, and in his baptiſm is buried into death with him; that his old man is crucified with Chriſt, and he planted into a likeneſs or conformity unto his death; whence, of courſe, he comes likewiſe to be made conformable unto his reſurrection, and lives and walks in newneſs, not of conduct only, but of life alſo; this

life

life that he hath by the Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in him, being freed from the law, and become his. This he there ſpeaks of as a thing well known among Chriſtians; and takes it for granted, in his epiſtle to the Coloſſians, that they are dead, and riſen with Chriſt. See ch. ii. 20.; iii. 1.—3. And again, writing to the Philippians, he propoſes it as his higheſt aim, "to "know Chriſt, and the power of his re- "ſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his "ſufferings, being made conformable unto "him in his death;" and thence draws proper concluſions for diſtinguiſhing the Chriſtian from counterfeits, and preſſing ſuch duties as naturally follow on ſuch a ſtate of things. See Rom. viii. 9. 10. 13.; vi. 1. 11.; Gal. v. 24.; vi. 14.; Col. iii. 5. 9. &c.

Neither is the Apoſtle Paul ſingular in theſe ways of ſpeaking: he learned them from our bleſſed Lord himſelf, and his manner of opening the buſineſs for which he came into the world; where we find him ſetting himſelf forth, on all occaſions, as the "light and life of the world," "the bread," i. e. the proper ſupport of life, "the reſurrection," &c. And whoſo-

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ever will be at pains to compare theſe and ſuch other expreſſions made uſe of by him, with what he has laid down in the moſt peremptory and ſolemn manner, as the only way whereby any man can become a diſciple of his, viz. "denying "himſelf, taking up his croſs, and fol- "lowing him," and the practice of the primitive Chriſtians, in compliance therewith, together with the Old-Teſtament facts referred to by him and his apoſtles, will there find a very fair key to this ſeeming riddle in my text; by which it will appear perfectly plain and eaſy, the very truth, as it is in Jeſus, and as it was from the beginning.

It may not therefore be amiſs, before we enter upon the particular conſideration of the ſtate the Apoſtle here gives us of the Chriſtian life, to take ſome general view of thoſe facts upon which he founds his deſcription, the ſeveral kinds of life and death, and the ſeveral ſtations and conditions, which mankind have been, or may be in, with reſpect to the one or the other of them.

There is nothing men commonly reckon themſelves better acquainted with than

than what we call *life* and *death;* and yet there is nothing we know leſs about in reality. Death, we have hardly any other notion of, than that it puts an end to life, and the activity and powers of the living creature, except what we have annexed to it from the imperfect obſervations we make on the diſſolution of the bodily fabric in animals and men. But what life is, and wherein it conſiſts, is all a myſtery. Something we know of its effects, of what we call living, and that only by the obſervations we make on that very imperfect life which we, or the creatures about us, enjoy. But how ſuperior beings, exempted from matter, or even from ſuch groſs bodies as ours, do live, we can judge no better than one born deaf and blind can do of ſounds or colours, and as palpably betray our ignorance when we attempt to gueſs at it. But as that is no argument againſt the truth of the thing, and the real exiſtence of beings poſſeſſed of powers which we have no knowledge of, there may be as many different kinds of lives as there are different kinds and degrees of vital powers and activity, or as theſe may be differently modified and varied. Thus,

ſo

ſo far as our obſervations go, we find ſomething we call life in vegetables, animals, and men; but all of very different kinds. We ſee it is ſo by the different effects: but ſtill *life* itſelf, that which makes them live, lies quite out of ſight. It is in the hand of God the great creator. He only has life in himſelf. It is his property, and no creature can have it but by his gift.

As no creature has life in itſelf, or any property in its being; ſo the moſt perfect of the creatures have nothing in themſelves to ſupport and maintain them in the poſſeſſion of it. Their ſuſtenance lies all without them, and thence muſt be gathered in. This is what we perceive very plainly in our own, and all the ſeveral kinds of life which fall within our obſervation. We cannot ſubſiſt a moment without air to breathe in; and but a very little time without food; and very uncomfortably without light and heat, and the conveniencies of life. And the more noble and excellent the things are which the creature ſubſiſts on, and finds his pleaſure in, the more excellent the creature itſelf is very juſtly reckoned. It is this

which diſtinguiſhes men from brutes, and the ſeveral claſſes and ſpecies of both from one another. And if there were (as we have good reaſon to think there are) beings which can ſubſiſt directly and immediately on God, and can find their pleaſure and happineſs in him, without any dependence at all on their fellow-creatures, theſe, it muſt be allowed, are the moſt noble of all, and may ſubſiſt and enjoy themſelves perfectly, though the whole univerſe beſides were ſunk into nothing.

There is another difference we find among creatures, which ſerves to diſtinguiſh them one from another, viz. that ſome of them are perfect in their kind when they come firſt from their creator's hand, and admit of no further improvement; though perhaps they may be capable of addition or abatement in actual enjoyment: others there are, which, even to our obſervation, grow up from ſmall and very low beginnings, through ſeveral intermediate ſtages, to their laſt and moſt perfect ſtate; which is ſo different from the firſt, that no body would have thought it the ſame being, had not they themſelves been

been witneſſes to the ſeveral changes. Thus it is with plants, animals, and inſects moſt remarkably. It is ſo likewiſe with men: and who could have ſaid, had we not been taught it by infallible authority, where the ſtandard of human perfection was to be found? what different ſtations we have to paſs through ere we arrive at it? and whether this which we are ſo fond of, is not indeed our embryo ſtate, out of which we are to emerge into one entirely of another kind? nay, and whether we may not riſe up to that moſt perfect ſtate we ſpoke of, to live directly on God? Theſe things are altogether in the hand of God; and no man can ſay they will or will not be, until God reveal his mind, and declare what he deſigns them to be.

God, the great ſovereign, might, had he ſo pleaſed, have peopled the world at once: He could, with the ſame eaſe, have furniſhed the world with plants and animals, which ſhould laſt as long as the world ſtood; or renewed the face of the earth, and produced the ſeveral generations of men and beaſts, as he did at the firſt creation. But he has (and we are

ſure for wiſe reaſons, whether we perceive them or not) thought fit to propagate them in the method we ſee done, every ſpecies of them by their proper ſeed. Particularly he has choſen to make of one blood all the families of the earth, and from one pair to bring all the individuals he ever deſigned into being. This makes another difference among created beings, viz. ſuch as receive their vital powers immediately from their creator's hand; and thoſe who have them by the intervention of others, as ſo many channels, or means of conveyance of life, with all the powers belonging to it. This laſt is as evidently an exertion of creating power, as the making a human body out of the duſt of the earth; and is rather a fairer diſplay of the power and contrivance of the great creator. This is what we call *the courſe of nature;* but it muſt never be forgot, that it is the *divine conſtitution*, appointing things to be as they are, that makes *nature:* and the powers of nature are but the power of God, making his conſtitutions effectual.

It is further to be obſerved, that had it pleaſed God to make man juſt ſuch a creature as he now is, and to put him preciſely

ciſely into the ſame circumſtances in which at preſent we find him: had this been the fixed order, and what we call *the law of creation*, that man ſhould be thus born, and grow up by degrees, with the ſame meaſures and kind of vital powers, and the ſame proſpect and means of external life; it could never have entered into any one's head to find fault with it, or abſolutely to ſay, as the clay to the potter, "Why haſt thou made me thus?" And this will hold, though there had been no proſpect beyond the grave. This, however, is the ſtate in which mankind are found. And whatever way God was pleaſed to take for bringing us there, whether directly by creation, or by the fall of our firſt parents, alters not the caſe. If it would have been no injuſtice to us to create us in no better ſtate, it ſurely can be none to ſuffer us to fall into it.

But there are many things which, even in our preſent very imperfect views, make it an inſtance at once of ſuperlative wiſdom and goodneſs to us, that our firſt father was created in a higher and better ſtate. One among many deſerves our attention. It is notorious how fond men naturally

naturally are of a preſent world, and how hard it is to draw them off from their attachment to it, even after all that our gracious God has held forth to engage their attention and affections to ſpiritual and eternal things. Theſe are all unſeen, and indeed ſuch as it is not only very hard, but even impoſſible, to form any notion, or proper conception of them, until they are either illuſtrated by ſenſible documents, or the mind prepared by ſome ſenſible image or analogous repreſentation. The paradiſiacal ſtate of our firſt parents anſwers all theſe purpoſes. It is an hiſtorical repreſentation of the happineſs of a man in friendſhip with his creator: and the ſtate of things there was ſo much preferable to the preſent, as makes us naturally regret the forfeiture, and wiſh to be reſtored to the poſſeſſion of it. It affords, moreover, to all ages and generations of men, a ſenſible document of three things, which we want much to be inſtructed in, viz. the unhappy conſequences which neceſſarily attend diſobedience to the divine conſtitution and order;—the unhappy and dangerous ſituation the moſt perfect man would be in, were his life and happineſs

put

put upon his own good behaviour; — and further, That the man who will not be content to live by the mere grace of his creator, muſt certainly periſh. Thus, by one man, the moſt perfect and beſt inſtructed man that ever was, ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin: A merciful warning to his poſterity, never to attempt any other way of living than their creator and ſovereign proprietor has allotted them.

But the main and principal deſign of putting our firſt father in the circumſtances we find him, was, we are aſſured, to exhibit in him a real and ſenſible figure of *him* who was to come; the perſon whom God had choſen to ſet at the head of the new creation, as Adam was at the head of the firſt; the author and fountain of eternal life to all that ſhould ever have any ſhare in it. We have the parallel finely drawn by the Apoſtle, Rom. v. and 1 Cor. xv. 45. to 50. The ſum of it is, that the *firſt man* created as he was out of this earth, ſtood at the head of all the ſucceeding generations of earthly men; and was the only man who had acceſs to ſtand before God, to receive life, and the terms of life, for himſelf and his ſeed, and to convey the ſame

ſame to his deſcendents in the courſe of natural generation: *He* failed in the performance of the terms, and judgement was accordingly given, fixing the ſtate and condition of mankind ſo long as the world ſtands. The *ſecond man*, who is the Lord from heaven, God and man united in the perſon of Jeſus by an indiſſoluble and eſſential union, was the only one of the ſons of Adam who could ſtand before God, as the head of the new creation, with reſpect to the ſpiritual and eternal ſtate of mankind, to receive and fulfil the terms of life for them: *He* accordingly performed the terms, and had given unto him the diſtinguiſhing privilege, of having life in himſelf; and thence he is become "the reſurrection and "the life" to all his ſeed, quickening their ſouls in time by his Spirit, and raiſing their bodies at the laſt day, when the final judgement ſhall be pronounced, determining and fixing their eternal ſtate; ſo as neither ſin nor death ſhall ever enter into that perfect and happy ſtation.

And thus we have before us thoſe very different ſtations, which all the children of Adam muſt ſucceſſively paſs through, who are ſo happy as to ſhare in the glories of

of the eternal ſtate; and three very different lives, and ways of living, anſwering theſe ſtations. 1. The natural ſtate, in which the judgement given on our firſt parents fixes all their poſterity, and the life which all their poſterity derive from them. 2. The ſtate which Chriſtians, men in Chriſt, are raiſed to in a preſent world, by his Spirit quickening their ſpirits, and that divine life they are made ſharers of when they are again admitted members of the ſpiritual world. And, 3. The ſtate they enter upon at the reſurrection, when they ſhall be admitted to bear the perfect image of their head. There was a repreſentation, a ſort of image of all theſe, in the ſtate of the firſt man. There can be no doubt of his being poſſeſſed of the life he conveyed to his poſterity; and as little of his being a member of the ſpiritual world, when he converſed freely with his creator. And his paradiſiacal ſtate was as fair an image of the eternal one, as could be exhibited in ſenſible things; and is accordingly uſed through the divine writings as an emblem thereof.

But it was only a little time that man

continued there. How long, is an improper inquiry; as it is impoſſible for us to know, and could anſwer no manner of purpoſe if it was known. That was not the ſtation God deſigned for man: he had infinitely higher views for him; and had from eternity ſet up another kind of ſtandard of human perfection and happineſs in his bleſſed Son. So that, in truth, his loſs was ſo far from being matter of regret, either to himſelf or his poſterity, that it was incomparably better for both, than if, by his ſtanding, he and all his poſterity had been confined to that low ſtate. But however that may be, by the fall of our firſt parents, and the judgement given upon it, the ſtate of mankind was fixed. Death was entailed on them, and all that ever ſhould derive life from them; and they were left in the ſame condition into which at preſent we either do or may feel ourſelves ſunk; cut off from all acquaintance and commerce with the ſpiritual world, and no way of acceſs left until it is reſtored in Chriſt; confined to the creature, and condemned to pick up ſuch a pitiful ſubſiſtence as this world can afford us; which yet pleaſeth

ſeth us perfectly: A moſt convincing evidence that we are fit for nothing elſe.

We ſhould have been, perhaps, for ever at a loſs whence this incapacity proceeded, and have made, as many have done, a great many ſilly gueſſes about it, had it not been for the way in which we find it cured, and the ſpiritual life reſtored, viz. The gift that is made of the Holy Spirit, as a new inward vital principle, and the ſpring of all ſpiritual powers. This marks the diſtinguiſhing character of this kind of life; and will be found the only way whereby God communicates himſelf, and manifeſts his glory; and we may ſay, the only way whereby he can do it to ſuch creatures as we are, in the condition wherein Adam hath left us. And thoſe who feel the effects of the Spirit will ſoon be convinced, that all the darkneſs and incapacity we are under of finding any pleaſure in God, was owing to the want of it.

And now, if any ſhould aſk, as ignorant and fooliſh men will always be aſking impertinent queſtions, How is it conſiſtent with the juſtice and goodneſs of God, to take away his Spirit, and thereby

render a whole ſpecies of creatures miſerable for the fault of one; whom they had no further concern in, than that God himſelf had made him their common parent, and ſet him at their head? the anſwer is ready, What if God had never given his Spirit, either to him or them, and left them juſt ſuch animals as they are? What if he had given his Spirit for a time, and taken it away without any fault at all; who durſt have ſaid it was wrong? But when we have this Spirit, by a ſtanding conſtitution, conveyed to all who will receive him; and conveyed in a way, as much preferable to the courſe of natural generation, as the bleſſed Son of God is to Adam, and the glories and joys of heaven are preferable to his paradiſe; how perverſe muſt the ſpirits of men be, who will find fault with a proviſion, which brings man as near to God as it is poſſible a creature, even the higheſt and moſt excellent, can be?

In that intermediate ſtation, wherein the Spirit of God abides in the Chriſtian, while yet he continues in the fleſh, the body he derived from Adam; we have the two very different lives derived from the

firſt,

firſt and ſecond man, ſubſiſting in ſome ſort together in the ſame perſon. The ſoul of man, once dead to God and the ſpiritual and eternal world, buried in ſenſe, and enſlaved to all ſenſual and worldly luſts, cravings, and appetites, now reſtored to its proper life by Jeſus Chriſt, becomes capable of its proper buſineſs, to live as a ſpirit ſhould do; while yet Adam's life remains in theſe bodies, and all the baſe and low appetites and paſſions belonging to it, never to be rooted out, until theſe corruptible bodies put on incorruption, and mortality be ſwallowed up of life. Thus, then, the caſe ſtands: By our firſt birth, as children of Adam, we are born into this world, and good for nothing elſe; by the Spirit reſtored in the new birth, we are brought into the ſpiritual world; and become the children of God by Jeſus Chriſt. But our relation to the firſt Adam, and our connections with this his world, are never broken, until theſe bodies return to the duſt, from which they were originally taken: and when theſe ſhall be raiſed up, and not till then, the myſtery of God will be finiſhed in their perfect union with, and conformity

mity to their glorious head. But juſt ſo far as any man comes to be united and alive to Chriſt, juſt ſo far is he disjoined from and dead to Adam.

And as our bleſſed Redeemer is not only the author of eternal ſalvation, by fulfilling the terms of life, and thereby looſing the bands of death, nay, the ſpring, the fountain, and beſtower of it; but likewiſe the pattern to which we muſt be conformed, ſo as not only to live as he does, but enter into it the ſame way alſo; hence we may ſee the true ſenſe of our Lord's words, upon which all the reſt are founded, "Denying one's ſelf, taking up "our croſs, and following him." I know not how ſelf-denial, and taking up the croſs, have been dwindled away into that poor low metaphorical ſenſe in which they are generally taken. Moſt certainly it is ſomething more than refuſing to gratify, or croſſing this or the other corrupt appetite, or even ſuch as are not ſimply unlawful, and bearing the afflictions and diſtreſſes that God in his providence ſees fit to order in their lot. Theſe are indeed the duties of Chriſt's diſciples: but denying themſelves, and taking up the croſs,

are

are their entrance into that relation. The child of Adam ſtands, almoſt in all reſpects, oppoſite to the child of God: at leaſt the life of Adam, with all that belongs to it, ſtands ſo to the life of Chriſt. This is indeed the man's very *ſelf*; and nothing can make one a diſciple of Chriſt, but bringing this ſelf to the croſs, the inſtrument of death, renouncing it for ever, as what he muſt have no more to do with, and chuſing to follow Chriſt, with an abſolute dependence on him for all, whereever he is pleaſed to lead.

This will, I hope, appear, with abundant evidence, from the conſideration of the Apoſtle's profeſſion here; which, indeed, is no more than a deſcription of his own compliance with theſe our Lord's terms of diſcipleſhip. For,

FIRST, He had perfectly denied himſelf, and taken up his croſs: *I am crucified*, ſaith he, *with Chriſt*. Thus he followed him in his death. And being conformed unto him in that firſt ſtep,

SECONDLY, He followed him in his reſurrection. Though he was crucified, yet *he lived*: He was not left in a ſtate of death. It was his old man only that was crucified,

and

and the life he had from Adam that was put an end to by his death. He had another life in exchange, and an incomparably better one, the life of Chriſt, by which he was quickened with him into a new man; which yet he deſcribes ſo as to give Chriſt the whole property in it. It was of ſuch a nature, that it was not ſo much he *that lived*, as Chriſt *that lived in him*. That is the Chriſtian's life, the life of the new creature.

THIRDLY, He deſcribes his way of living in this new ſtate: *He lived in the fleſh*, the *body* he derived from Adam. That he ſtill carried about with him, as all the children of God do until death ſet them at liberty: but yet he lived not *after* the fleſh, as Adam's children do; nor could he in that ſituation walk by ſight, as the glorified ſhall do in their heavenly ſtate; but, as one who had his heart and all his intereſts in the unſeen world, the *life he lived in the fleſh, was by the faith of the Son of God.*——In the FOURTH and laſt place, He concludes his account with the diſtinguiſhing acting and exerciſe of true faith in Chriſt, by applying his love, and the bleſſed fruits of it, in giving himſelf for his people, particularly to

to himſelf: *Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* And if we can but make out any thing of a diſtinct account of theſe four particulars, I believe we ſhall have before us a very fair view of the Chriſtian life, as it ſubſiſts in a preſent world.

DISSERTATION I.

I am crucified with Chriſt.

WE begin naturally where the Apoſtle doth, with the only way by which a child of Adam can enter into this life, viz. by being *crucified with Chriſt.*

And here we muſt, in the *firſt* place, carefully examine the import of the Apoſtle's expreſſion; and then it will be eaſy to ſhow, in the *ſecond* place, that this is the only entrance into the Chriſtian life.

I. FIRST, we are to examine the Apoſtle's expreſſion, and fix the true import and meaning of it.

And this would by no means be a difficult taſk, from the general obſervations we have made concerning the ſeveral ſtations, and different lives, which mankind paſs through before they attain their ſtate of perfection, were it not for the many

miſtakes that have been committed in this fundamental article of Chriſtianity, and the many ſhifts that have been fallen upon to explain away this and the other ſcripture-expreſſions of the ſame import. I will not ſtand ſo much as to take particular notice of them, where there is ſuch endleſs variety; thoſe worth noticing will fall in our way as we go along: and moſt of them are founded ſo far in ſome part of truth, that the only error lies in not taking in the whole; which yet makes them very dangerous ones, maiming the views that God has given us, by putting a part inſtead of the whole.

There are three things before us in the account the Apoſtle gives of himſelf, which muſt be well underſtood before we can pretend to underſtand it: — the ſubject he ſpeaks of; — what he aſſerts concerning it; — and the way in which it is done: *I am crucified with Chriſt.*

1. That the ſubject the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of is himſelf, cannot be refuſed; the ſame man who lived in the fleſh by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt. And as it was in this view, as a man in Chriſt, or one who had Chriſt living in him, (for theſe two

two are the ſame in the true Chriſtian language, as they always go together), that he ſays *he lived;* it muſt be in the oppoſite ſtation, as a child of the firſt Adam, and deriving life from him, that he ſaith he *was crucified.* As this will hardly be denied by any body, thus generally expreſſed, eſpecially when it is conſidered, how frequently, and in what ſtrong terms, we have the ſame thing aſſerted of every Chriſtian; and had the life of Adam been entirely deſtroyed, as it certainly will be at death, and the man raiſed again, as Jeſus Chriſt was, into the poſſeſſion of a new life entirely different from that which he had loſt, which will be the caſe when the life of Chriſt is perfected in them; there could have been no difficulty at all in apprehending his meaning. But how a man living in that fleſh he derives from Adam, can be ſaid to be crucified, dead, and buried with Chriſt; this by many is thought impoſſible, unleſs it be in ſome very improper and figurative ſenſe, viz. that it is not the man, but ſomething about him, that is crucified: not his life, or being in Adam, and as deriving from him; for that they ſay ſtill continues;

but only his way of living, or his corrupt converſation: ſo that the expreſſion means no more but dying to ſin and living to righteouſneſs; and therefore the old man, the fleſh, and one's ſelf, or the *I* that is ſaid to be *crucified*, can be no more than the former luſts in his ignorance; or, at moſt, but the corrupt nature derived from Adam; which, by a bold figure, the Apoſtle here perſonifies, and makes a man of.

This laſt, the corrupt nature derived from Adam, if it have any meaning at all different from natural corruption, is the very thing we ſpeak of. The life and powers of the man are his very nature, and make him what he is, the child of Adam, or the child of God, as they come either through Adam, or through Chriſt; and the whole difficulty ariſes from the want of diſtinct apprehenſions, both of the one and the other; eſpecially of the Chriſtian life, as it ſubſiſts in this world. It is of a hidden nature, both as it is ſpiritual, and as it is in a peculiar manner "*hid* with Chriſt in God;" hidden abſolutely from the men of the world, the wiſeſt and moſt learned of them; and in a great

great meaſure hid from thoſe who live by it. Hence it is, I am afraid, very commonly imagined, that the life which Chriſt has to beſtow, is no more but the reſtoring, and lengthening out to eternity, the life which was given to Adam, and by him conveyed to us; the new creature no more but the child of Adam purged from his natural and acquired corruptions and bad tempers; and that all that is ſpoken of their being "born again," "born of "the Spirit," "begotten and born of "God," "having the ſeed of God abiding "in them," with many more ſuch high-ſounding deſcriptions, mean no more than a pompous deſcription of a man's turning from ſin to righteouſneſs, and from ſeeking happineſs in the creature to find it in the creator. And thence have ariſen all thoſe ſchemes of religion, very falſely called *rational*, which make it ſo eaſy a matter, that every one may be a Chriſtian when he pleaſes.

Mean while it is an agreed point, (and agreed, I believe, only becauſe it is a plain ſenſible fact which will not bear a diſpute), that the bodies we derive from Adam cannot enter into heaven, until they are

are either entirely diſſolved, and reduced to their original duſt, or ſo changed, as the Apoſtle ſays theirs will be who are alive at the laſt day. Why might not the whole man, the child of Adam as he is, be continued in the poſſeſſion of life? No reaſon can be given but one of two; either that he was not capable of it, until he was changed, refitted, and new created; or that a divine conſtitution and order ſtood in his way. All comes to one, which ſide ſoever we take: for is not that the ſame conſtitution by which it is appointed for all men once to die? and is not that the ſame with the judgement given on our firſt parents, on their tranſgreſſion of the original law, "In the day "thou eateſt, thou ſhalt ſurely die?" Surely it ſtrikes as ſtrongly againſt the life of the ſoul as that of the body. It is true we do not ſee the ſoul die, as we do the body: and good reaſon we do not, when we do not ſee the ſoul at all, neither know wherein its life or death doth lie. But if we did, we would be able to feel it dead; every man might feel it by his inward ſenſe, as ſtrongly to his conviction, and even more ſo, than he can perceive a

body

body to be dead. Though we know not what life is, yet we certainly know it comes all from God; and that indeed no creature can ſubſiſt a moment in life without him, nor in any other ſtation or manner than he has ordained it. Whenever then the ſoul of man comes to be cut off from the fountain of life, or, which is the ſame thing, deſerts the ſtation and way of living God has allotted, die it muſt. This is no metaphyſical refining: whoever pleaſes may bring it to the only teſt of truth, in which all demonſtration terminates, the inward ſenſe and feeling of the man. The creature muſt be concluded dead, when all its vital actions and operations ceaſe: when a ſpirit can neither perceive, nor reliſh, nor have any commerce with ſpiritual objects, nay not ſo much as with the Father of ſpirits, where is its life? We have no more to do then, to be fully ſatisfied whether our ſpirits are alive or dead, than to try what we can make of God, or the ſpiritual and eternal world, and what pleaſure we can find there. Evidence enough we have that we are alive to this world: but not more than of our being dead to God. The

very

very ſentence, condemning man to this life, effectually declared him deprived of the other. And as men have lived ſo long alive to this world, and dead to God, what ſhould hinder them to live alive to God, and dead to the world, in the moſt proper and native ſenſe?

2. And this leads us to conſider what the Apoſtle aſſerts concerning the man thus made ſpiritually alive in Chriſt, viz. That he is *crucified*, and *crucified with Chriſt*. And if we can get to the right underſtanding of this, it will fully clear what we have ſaid on the other head. And in whatever ſenſe we take it, there are two things evidently included in it.

1*ſt*, That we are ſome how joint partners and partakers with Chriſt in his croſs and crucifixion. And,

2*dly*, That ſome how or other we are made conformable unto him in his death and ſufferings there.

And both theſe are ſo plainly taught in the New Teſtament, that there is no room left to diſpute either of them; nor do I think it was ever diſputed, even by thoſe who have in the moſt notorious manner ſhuffled Chriſt out of Chriſtianity.

And

And as he is evidently the principal and chief in both theſe views, and they who are ſaid to be crucified with him, are no more but acceſſories, we muſt, in the firſt place, conſider Jeſus Chriſt as crucified in his own proper perſon; and this will open our way to the true and diſtinct apprehenſion of the others in all the views we can take of them.

This is laid down in the New Teſtament as the great ſubject of what is there called *the goſpel*; and is ſtrictly and properly ſo; the glad tidings of the promiſe made to the fathers, from the foundation of the world, being actually fulfilled unto their children in his perſon. Thus the Apoſtles preached him firſt to the Jews; and thus we find the Apoſtle Paul declaring he preached him to the Gentiles, 1 Cor. xv. 3. "I delivered unto you firſt of all, that "which I alſo received, how that Chriſt "died for our ſins, and roſe again the "third day, according to the ſcriptures." And indeed the whole ſcriptures are no more but the record God has ordered to be made concerning his Son; in ſo much that this great Apoſtle, who certainly underſtood his buſineſs as well as any man ever

did, was determined to know nothing but "Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. Nay, he counted all things but loſs and dung for the excellency of that knowledge: and particularly in the view we have now before us: "To know him, and "the power of his reſurrection, and the "fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made "conformable unto his death;" Philipp. iii. 10.

And here we have him deſcribed to us by the title which he was known and diſtinguiſhed by among his diſciples and followers, but diſputed by the unbelieving Jews, *Chriſt*, or the anointed of God: A title well known in that nation; and by which the promiſed ſeed was diſtinguiſhed from all others, who were either typically or occaſionally anointed; if there were any ſuch, either kings, prieſts, or prophets, who were not, in ſome view or other, types, or figurative repreſentations of him. This deſignation, therefore, will lead us into all that is recorded concerning him, either in the Old Teſtament or New; the promiſes, prophecies, types, ſhadows, or images, which preceded his birth; and the whole hiſtory of his life, death,

death, reſurrection, with all the glory that followed; his perſon and qualifications; the character which he bore; the truſt committed to him; and the place he holds; the execution of that truſt, particularly in his death and ſufferings on the croſs; the intention and effect of it; and the iſſue and event of all in his kingdom and glory. This, it is eaſy to ſee, is a very large field, and would require a long time to ſurvey it but very ſuperficially. It is a ſtudy which will fully employ the longeſt life; and a ſubject which will never be exhauſted through all the ages of eternity. But to let us into the ſubject before us, it will be neceſſary to point to thoſe ſeveral views of him in which the foundation is laid, both of our conformity to him, and participation with him, in his death. And,

(1) We muſt conſider the perſon who was crucified; who and what he was: A point that the true knowledge of Chriſt almoſt entirely depends on. And this leads us to the conſideration of his hiſtory; how he was born, how he lived, and how he died. Theſe include the whole hiſtory of common men: but as all theſe were ex-

traordinary in him, they lead us up many ages, to the very beginning of the world; nay, and if we conſider him attentively, we will find him ſet up from eternity, and that his life and death are but an introduction to his hiſtory; and we ſhall find him living and reigning for ever and ever, without any end of his dominion. Thus he was ſpoken of before he made his appearance among men; and every tittle of it has been fulfilling hitherto, ſo far as the times are paſſed; and we are well aſſured, that not one tittle of it ſhall fall to the ground, until all be fulfilled.

His outward appearance, while he was in this world, was, in all reſpects, like that of other men: he was born, and grew up, and lived for a conſiderable time without being at all taken notice of; except by ſome few who were upon the ſecret of his birth, and were taught of God to acknowledge him in his early infancy. And even after he entered on his public character, he continued to live in the ſame low mean way in the world's accounts, deſpiſed and rejected of men; until, at laſt, after much contempt put upon him by thoſe who were at the head of affairs, the great and the wiſe

wiſe men of the world, he was ſpitefully and maliciouſly brought to death as a malefactor; though, in the whole courſe of his life, he was never found guilty, either of ſaying or doing a wrong thing.

But it was not in mere innocence that his merit lay: for a courſe of years in which he appeared publicly, he went about doing good both to the ſouls and bodies of men; and with ſuch earneſt intenſeneſs, that he ſacrificed to it his own eaſe, quiet, and even the neceſſary ſupports of life; with ſuch condeſcenſion, that he never ſent any one away without the errand they came upon; and with ſuch ſucceſs, that no diſeaſe or ailment, either in body or ſpirit, ever proved too hard for him. With a word he commanded away all manner of diſeaſes and defects; even the devils, and death itſelf, obeyed his orders, and quitted their prey. As it was a plain caſe, that no man could do ſuch works as theſe, unleſs God was with him, the loweſt that could be thought of him, was his being a teacher ſent from God. But when his miraculous birth, and yet more miraculous death, came to be compared with his reſurrection, and aſcenſion

ſcenſion to heaven; and when the divine power he was there poſſeſſed of, appeared by the fulfilment of the promiſe he had made his diſciples, of ſending the Holy Spirit, this finiſhing evidence ratified the account he had given of himſelf; and the higheſt of his pretenſions, to be the Chriſt, the Son of the living God, which the thoughtleſs Jews reckoned blaſphemy, appeared to be the very truth.

And this carries one's apprehenſions of him to a height which no man, at leaſt in our preſent ſtate of imperfection, can form any tolerable notion of, viz. That he was a perſon truly divine; not in that low trifling ſenſe in which it has been ignorantly attributed to men, but as one in whom God truly and properly dwells; a man aſſumed into ſo near, and even an eſſential union with the Deity, that he comes to be poſſeſſed of all divine power and perfection; to have life in himſelf, even as the Father hath; and accordingly to be honoured of all as he is: a man who is, in all reſpects, ſet at the head of the whole creation of God, with all power in heaven and earth, all judgement, and the very Spirit of God, with all his gifts and fulneſs

fulneſs committed unto him. Such was the Jeſus who was crucified; never deſtitute of power to effect what nothing leſs than divine power could; and yet condeſcending to ſorrows and ſufferings, ſuch as the loweſt and baſeſt of mankind would not ſubmit to without the utmoſt neceſſity. Such an extraordinary perſon acting in ſuch an extraordinary manner, is the moſt ſenſible document that can be given of a deſign, much above human wiſdom to contrive, or human power to effect. And this leads,

(2) To conſider him in his public character, the place he holds in the univerſe, and the purpoſes he was deſigned to anſwer there. And great things we find ſpoken of his relation to, and influence upon, the whole creation of God; as by him all things were made, and are ſtill upheld by the word of his power, as the chief of the creation of God, and the head of principalities and powers. Theſe dignities and royalties of his deſerve our moſt ſerious regard, and are a very conſiderable part of that glory which belongs unto his name. But as he has condeſcended more immediately to unite himſelf with the ſons of

Adam,

Adam, and even to become one of them, it is in this view we have him ſet forth in the goſpel evidently crucified before us, and are therefore in a particular manner intereſted in him, beyond any other order of beings. And thus it is that we are called in a ſpecial manner to conſider him.

The title he has aſſumed upon this occaſion, and by which he has choſen to be known among men, the *Meſſiah*, the *Chriſt*, the *Anointed*, carries in it a ſpecial deſignation to ſome office or buſineſs, and full authority and power for the diſcharge of what belongs to it. This we could not have known with any tolerable certainty, had not God led us to it himſelf by particular inſtitutions, plainly deſigned to furniſh us with an image, whereon we might form our conceptions of it. The anointing certain public perſons under the Moſaic law, particularly kings, prieſts, and prophets, was not only a ſymbol of inveſtiture; but, eſpecially when done by the immediate order of God, conveyed a *ſpirit*; that is, all neceſſary abilities for what they were called to. And yet that anointing was but an image, a ſort of outward repreſentation; the oil there being the outward

outward figure and ſhadow of that Spirit, which dwells without meaſure in the true Anointed.

The perſons appointed by the divine law to be thus anointed with oil, lead us further into the nature of his public character; and are indeed the only words in human language by which it can be expreſſed; including ſuch as are either naturally, or by peculiar conſtitution, connected with them. Thus he is repreſented to us, as the authoriſed *interpreter* of the divine mind, to reveal to us the knowledge of God, and his counſels and purpoſes, ſo far as we have any concern in them; as the great *interceſſor* between God and man, by whom all their mutual communion is managed; and the *king* by whom they are in God's name ruled and governed. All theſe are comprehended under one general name of *Mediator:* not in the confined notion it is commonly uſed among men, to make peace, and accommodate differences between parties at variance; but in the moſt extended ſenſe; as it is by him alone that man can have acceſs to ſtand before God, or receive any thing from him; life, or any of the comforts and enjoyments of it: and all that was ſhadowed

out under the particular offices of a king, a prieſt, and a prophet, are but the particular branches of this general character.

All this ſuppoſes a ſpecial relation to man in his preſent ſtate, and appears to have been deſigned for his benefit and advantage, and contrived on purpoſe to anſwer all his exigencies and neceſſities, and to raiſe him to that ſtate of perfection and glory we have brought under our obſervation, and ſet fairly before us, in the perſon of Jeſus. Ruined as we were, as to the happineſs of the firſt creation, by the miſconduct of Adam, and rendered incapable of holding poſſeſſion of the life we derived from him, we muſt have been held for ever under the power of death, if a proper hand had not been provided to looſe the bands of death, and raiſe up a new creation out of the ruins of the old. It is on this account that Chriſt bears the character of a Saviour and Redeemer, of which we have many images in the Old-Teſtament record, in the temporal ſalvations of the Iſraelitiſh nation, and peculiarly in an ordinance inſtituted on purpoſe for redeeming perſons and inheritances in the land of Canaan; which founds

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a great part of the New-Teſtament language on this ſubject.

Our great Redeemer was abundantly provided with ſufficient power to have effected their deliverance from the depths of the grave, and even from hell itſelf. But by the event it appears, that "it became "him, for whom are all things, and by "whom are all things, in bringing many "ſons unto glory, to make the captain "of their ſalvation perfect through ſuf-"ferings." And from the beginning of the world, we find all communion with God, in any intercourſe of friendſhip, founded in ſacrifice, the moſt direct and ſignificant repreſentation of the death of the Redeemer; and which never could have entered into the wildeſt imagination but by a divine inſtitution. This has laid the foundation of another part of the New-Teſtament language, where we have the ſame Redeemer ſet before us as the great prieſt over the houſe of God, by one ſacrifice he made of himſelf, opening the way into the holieſt, the very preſence of God, and thence bleſſing his people in the name of the Lord.

It would make too long a digreſſion from

our preſent purpoſe, to enter upon a particular application of theſe generals. Something will fall in afterwards. We only obſerve, how, in theſe, and all the other views comprehended under them, Chriſt bears the character of a public perſon, and ſtands at the head of mankind in the new creation, as Adam did in the old, repreſenting the whole kind; every individual of whom are virtually in him, as all Adam's ſeed were in him. Thus, we find the perfect interceſſor deſcribed by the Apoſtle, Heb. v. 1. 2. 3.; and the character applied to him, viz. "one taken from a-"mong men, and ordained for men in "things pertaining to God." And when the prophet and the king are likewiſe taken in, as they are in his perſon united with the prieſthood, we have the faireſt repreſentation that can be drawn of him in this view. And thus we are led to conceive of him in a twofold light; as repreſenting his people before God, appearing in his preſence for them, and taking care of their intereſts and concerns in all that they have to do with him, either in relation to their preſent or eternal ſtate; and repreſenting God to them, acting towards them

them in his name, and making all the bleſſings of his kingdom effectual to them; and thus he becomes to them the head of the body, deriving down to every member, out of the fulneſs which is lodged in him, life, eternal life, with all the perfections and powers that belong to it, or which they can ever have occaſion for.

(3) This naturally leads us into the nature of his death, with the ends and purpoſes it was deſigned to anſwer; the greateſt and moſt aſtoniſhing event the world ever ſaw. And as it appears by every circumſtance to have been entirely his own choice, what he could with the greateſt eaſe have ſaved himſelf from, but what himſelf tells us he had in his view from the time he entered himſelf among the ſons of Adam, it muſt therefore deſerve our utmoſt attention.

That a man ſo nearly related to God, united as he was in ſuch a ſingular manner to the fountain of life, ſhould die, is, if duly conſidered, the moſt unlikely thing that ever fell out in the whole compaſs of the creation of God; ſo ſtrange, that nothing but the event itſelf could make one imagine the thing poſſible. And if he

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choſe to lay down his life, (the only caſe wherein it was poſſible for him to die), that he ſhould have choſen ſuch a death as that of the croſs, a death which none but ſlaves and the baſeſt of mankind were expoſed to; the moſt ſhameful, the moſt painful, and tormenting death, of all that ever were deviſed; and introduced too with ſuch diſtreſſing circumſtances, and previous ſufferings, ſuch as never another man ſubmitted to; theſe things could by no means happen by chance, or in the courſe of ordinary providence; and therefore muſt argue ſome very extraordinary intention. The ſingle circumſtance of his ſpeedy reſurrection is ſufficient to aſſure us of this: that he died only for dying's ſake, if we may expreſs it ſo; and that, by his dying, the great deſign he had in hand was finiſhed; as himſelf declared it was, when he gave up his life before nature was exhauſted; and he might, if he had ſo pleaſed, continued it longer.

There is one ſingular circumſtance attending that kind of death which he choſe, that it was the only one which had a *curſe* annexed to it by divine inſtitution: "Cur-
" ſed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

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The nature and import of what bears that name we have, in many inſtances, declared, in that law where this inſtitution ſtands; it is no leſs than the total and irreparable deſtruction of that perſon or thing whereon the curſe reſts. It is a ſentence pronounced by the great ſovereign of heaven and earth, which can neither admit of repeal or abatement. Such was the original conſtitution by which all mankind were reduced to the ſtate they are now in; and particularly the neceſſity they are under of dying, and giving up the life they derive from Adam; ſo indiſpenſable, that it admits of no hope but in a reſurrection from the dead. And ſuch was the caſe of thoſe ſacrifices which were deſigned for atonements in the typical law; which were but repreſentations of the only way to eternal life and immortality that the preſent ſtate admits of.

Thus our bleſſed Lord, the only way to life, and the door by which the ſheep can enter, ſo as to be ſaved, and find paſture, is repreſented to our faith as a propitiation for ſin, a ſacrifice, a ranſom, by whom we receive the atonement. All this is evidently Old-Teſtament language, the

way

way of ſpeaking that was in uſe among the people who were directly under the divine government; and thence we muſt gather the true intent and meaning of them. There we find two great but different occaſions in which they were ordered. The firſt was when the people were ſolemnly entered into the divine covenant at Sinai. The ſecond, on occaſion of after offences, which either the whole people, or particular perſons, might be guilty of. Theſe repreſented the analogous uſe of the death and ſacrifice of the great high prieſt over the houſe of God; *1ſt*, to take us off our firſt ſtanding under Adam, and enter us into the divine conſtitution and covenant of grace under Jeſus Chriſt; and, *2dly*, to provide for after failures and tranſgreſſions in that new ſtate. And thus, as the Iſraelites were ſtrongly cautioned againſt imagining, that either the land of Canaan was their natural birthright; or that they entered upon, and kept the poſſeſſion of it, by any merit or obedience of theirs; of both which the annual day of atonement was a continued memorial; to ſay nothing of their paſſover and daily ſacrifices, which, with all their

their other inſtitutions, anſwered the ſame purpoſe: In like manner are thoſe who hold the eternal inheritance, reminded and aſſured in the ſtrongeſt manner, that it is only by the grant of grace, ſealed and ratified in the blood of the Redeemer, that they either enter into, or hold the poſſeſſion of it.

In this light, the whole buſineſs of ſacrificature, which appeared ſo extremely ridiculous to the philoſophers and wiſe men of the world, will appear to us the wiſeſt, and at the ſame time the kindeſt and moſt advantageous inſtitution that could poſſibly have been given to man; as it anſwered two of the moſt valuable and momentous purpoſes they could be concerned in. There was, in the firſt place, a very ſolemn acknowledgement of the forfeiture, and an abſolute renunciation of all pretenſions to life, on any other footing or ground than the free and gracious grant of the creator and great author of life; the only temper that can become a creature, and much more a criminal. And, at the ſame time, the appointment and acceptance of the ſacrifice was the ſureſt

ſeal of the grant of grace, as it was the ſtrongeſt and moſt ſenſible aſſurance God could give to man of the ſincerity of his intentions, in the promiſes he had given of pardon and eternal life.

But all theſe were only ſhadows, deſigned for no other purpoſe, in relation to eternal life, than to lead forward the faith of the worſhippers to him who was the truth and ſubſtance of them all, and from whom they borrowed all the worth and value that was ever in them. The wiſdom and goodneſs of God were diſplayed in their utmoſt perfection in Jeſus Chriſt, at once the moſt effectual and endearing way of raiſing mankind to the higheſt perfection, dignity, and happineſs, they were capable of; and in him likewiſe the higheſt deteſtation of ſin was ſhown, in the higheſt manifeſtation of love to the perſon of the ſinner. Eternal life is to be had, and entered upon, on no other terms than the deſtruction of the creature that ſinned. Our Lord never intended to ſcreen the children of Adam from the ſtroke of juſtice, either by keeping them from dying, or raiſing them again into the poſſeſſion of the life they had forfeited. He did,

upon

upon the croſs, for himſelf, and all in whoſe name he then acted, renounce and give up the life, and all the powers of it, which he and they derived from Adam, into the hands of juſtice, to be utterly deſtroyed and put an end to. But he had higher views: he had a life in proſpect, by the promiſe of the Father, in the conſtitution of grace, as much above Adam's, as heaven is above earth, or God more excellent than the creature. This he betakes himſelf to, and this accordingly he entered upon at his reſurrection; and ſo do all that are made conformable unto his death, and have fellowſhip in his ſufferings. And

(4) This leads further to obſerve, the event and iſſue of his crucifixion and death in his reſurrection, and the glory that followed; — which finiſhes the view, and opens up all the myſtery that appeared in his former conduct; how, "for the joy "that was ſet before him, he endured the "croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and has ac- "cordingly ſat down on the right hand "of the throne of God; having all power "in heaven and in earth committed into "his hand."

Thus it appears, that in all the conde-

ſcenſion he ſhowed, in taking upon him the human nature, and humbling himſelf even to the death, he was fulfilling the terms of eternal life, and ſhowing that reſignation to his heavenly Father's will which became the head of the new creation, recovering a better paradiſe, by taking upon himſelf the burden brought upon mankind by the miſcarriage of their head in the firſt; and thus ſhowing himſelf to be in reality, what Adam was only in figure, the true ſpring and fountain of life.

It is a very impertinent queſtion that men who reckon themſelves very wiſe are ſtill aſking: Might not God have recovered mankind, by making them a free gift of eternal life? Juſt as wiſe a queſtion, as if one ſhould aſk, Whether he might not have made men angels, and beaſts men. We cannot ſay there is any thing God might not have done, if he had ſeen fit, except what is inconſiſtent with his perfections; and of that we are very incompetent judges. We will not therefore pretend to ſay what he might have done; but this we may ſafely ſay, that if he had done otherwiſe, man would not have been the

the creature he is, but of another kind. And now that God hath choſen to ſet his Son at the head of mankind, and by him to bring them into the neareſt relation to himſelf, ſuch as no other order of beings, ſo far as we know, have to boaſt of, we have all the reaſon in the world to think it the beſt and fitteſt, becauſe he has choſen it; and we are ſure it is infinitely better for us than any other way we could imagine would have been, in all the views that can be taken of it: and therefore, as it is the moſt inſolent preſumption for the creature to ſay to the creator, "Why haſt "thou made me thus?" ſo it is the moſt villanous ingratitude, to find fault with him, becauſe he did not leave us in lower or worſe circumſtances than he has done.

The truth of the matter is, the whole creation in general, and every ſpecies and individual, depend entirely on the divine will and conſtitution; they are what God has been pleaſed to make them, and higher they cannot go. All the powers of the univerſe united cannot change a plant to an animal, or a mere brute to a man. It is the firſt creation-conſtitution that determines our preſent ſtate, and makes us deſcend of Adam,

Adam, as we do, in the courſe of natural generation, and makes it impoſſible for any individual to enter another way. And if this be a divine conſtitution, that none ſhall enter the ſpiritual or eternal world but by Jeſus Chriſt, (and if there be ſuch a perſon as Chriſt, there is as certainly ſuch a conſtitution), what room is there left to aſk queſtions, and put caſes, on this more than the other? Surely every imagination of this kind is as properly renouncing God, and attempting to live without him, as ever Adam's aiming to be a God was; and muſt have the ſame event; but ſo much worſe than his, as the life we have given and ſecured to us in Chriſt, is ſo incomparably better than that which he forfeited by his diſobedience and rebellion; which, in truth, bears no greater proportion to it than a ſhadow does to the ſubſtance. Our Lord Jeſus is the perſon whom God hath choſen, and anointed in the moſt ſolemn manner that ſuch a thing could be done; and in the ſame manner has he declared his decree, appointing him the ſpring and fountain of eternal life. In him, and in him only, he has declared himſelf well pleaſed; ſo that

that there neither is, nor can be, any other alternative, but that we either live by him, or periſh eternally.

But not to enter any further into ſo inexhauſtible a ſubject, we may, upon this general view of the death and crucifixion of Chriſt, be able to form ſome tolerable notion of the import and meaning of the Apoſtle's expreſſion, *being crucified with Chriſt*; and particularly what we propoſed next to inquire into,

3. How the Apoſtle did, and how all true Chriſtians do, ſhare and *partake* with Chriſt in his death and ſufferings, ſo as they may be ſaid to be *crucified with him.*

That there is ſuch a relation ſubſiſting between Chriſt, and all who are Chriſtians, as gives them ſome ſpecial intereſt in him beyond others, and, in conſequence of it, ſome ſort of fellowſhip and communion with him in all his miniſtrations, and his death in a particular manner, is acknowledged by all who call themſelves Chriſtians: and according to the apprehenſions they have of that relation, the nearneſs or remoteneſs of it, ſuch are alſo their conceptions of their communion, fellowſhip, and partaking with him, both in his death and

and reſurrection. I will not enter into any particular detail of the different ſentiments upon this momentous ſubject, any further than they contribute to give ſome light into the account our Lord himſelf and his Apoſtles give of it. And here,

(1.) There can be no doubt, that as our Lord's appearance in the world, the whole of his public miniſtry, and particularly his death and ſufferings, were deſigned for the benefit and advantage of mankind; ſo they certainly have the benefit of it, and all the good which was deſigned and effected by it. Thoſe who conſider him only as a perfect man, and ſet before us as an example we are to copy after, conſider him in his death as a perfect pattern of patience and reſignation, under the moſt unhappy and cruel treatment one can poſſibly meet with in the world. Thoſe who conſider him as a teacher ſent from God, find, in his death and reſurrection, the ſtrongeſt confirmation that can be given to men of his divine miſſion. Thoſe who conceive of his undertaking, as that of a Redeemer and Saviour to deliver mankind from the deſtruction brought upon them by Adam's diſobedience, find pardon,

don, juſtification, and a right to eternal life, effected by his perfect fulfilment of that law which Adam failed in. All theſe benefits Chriſtians indeed have by his death, and many more. But whatever they are, and whatever communion or fellowſhip they may be ſuppoſed to have with Chriſt in them, this is not to have fellowſhip with him in his death, but in the fruits and effects of it; and if there is no more, they can never, in any tolerable propriety of ſpeech, be ſaid to be crucified or dead with him. And therefore,

(2) To anſwer the expreſſions made uſe of by the Apoſtle, it becomes neceſſary to take the relation higher, that all Chriſtians are in Chriſt as all mankind were in Adam, as the two heads of the old and new creation, repreſenting their whole reſpective ſpecies, and all that ſhould ever be of them, in the courſe of the firſt and ſecond birth: or, which is but an image of the ſame thing, Chriſt is to be conſidered as the great prieſt-interceſſor, repreſenting the whole people, and acting in their name. It is eaſy to ſee what a very near intereſt thoſe who are thus repreſented have in the perſon who acts in their name;

how it is their buſineſs he is managing as much as his own: and, in our Lord's caſe, it was in effect their buſineſs only; for what had he to do with death and ſufferings, and eſpecially ſuch a death as that of the croſs? Nay, what had he to do with fleſh, but to unite himſelf to them, to make himſelf a party with them, and to take their burden and their curſe upon himſelf, to open a way for their deliverance from it, that they might be at liberty to enter upon the poſſeſſion of that ſpiritual and eternal life which he has to convey to them? Thus truly and properly they have fellowſhip with him in his ſufferings, and are ſo far really and truly crucified with him. But,

(3) There is yet a nearer concern that Chriſtians have in the croſs of Chriſt; as he is not only their repreſentative acting in their name, but their ſacrifice and atonement: and one great deſign of that inſtitution was, certainly, to lead mankind into proper apprehenſions of their intereſt in, and connection with him, in his death and ſufferings. A ſacrifice was properly an image and repreſentation of what man ought to have ſuffered, transferred, by divine

vine appointment, upon the creature that was offered; and which, by this means, became a ranſom for their lives. It is called a *favour of reſt*, becauſe God acquieſced and reſted in that which was repreſented there, and at the ſame time gave reſt to the ſinner in all reſpects; as, after the acceptance of the ſacrifice, there was no more to give him any trouble. It is hardly poſſible to imagine a nearer and more intereſting connection, excepting only that real union betwixt Chriſt and believers, by which he lives in them. The ſacrifice is really the man himſelf: it ſtands in his room; and all his valuable intereſts, the concerns of life and death, with all the comforts and enjoyments of life, are imbarked there. It is eminently ſo in our Lord's undertaking: in his death and ſufferings he ſtood under their law; he bore the curſe of it; and by bearing, removed what ſhould otherwiſe have bound them under eternal death, without any poſſibility of releaſe. I only add,

(4) Every true Chriſtian is a partaker with Chriſt, and has fellowſhip with him in his death, by acquieſcing in, and ho-

mologating, approving, and adhering, to what he there did in their name; by which they enter themſelves under his croſs, and ratify for themſelves the renunciation he there made of Adam's life, and all that belongs to it, in the hope of that eternal life, which God hath promiſed in Chriſt before the world began. Thus they "are "baptized into his death," "buried with "him in baptiſm unto death;" and thus "their old man is crucified with Chriſt, "that the body of ſin may be deſtroyed;" "they become dead to the law;" and to complete the whole, "they are crucified to "the world, and the world crucified to "them;" that though they live and walk in the fleſh, they neither live nor walk after it.

And this leads us to that other view I mentioned, of *being crucified with Chriſt*, which the Apoſtle elſewhere expreſſes by "being made *conformable* unto his death."

Thoſe who imagine, that no more is neceſſary to make a child of Adam meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, than merely to have his natural faculties purged from their natural

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or acquired corruption and defilement; and that grace gives no new powers, but only takes off the adherent lets and impediments from off the old ones; or at moſt elevates and rouſes them to their proper heights of perfection: all theſe, of courſe, muſt conſtruct the old man which is crucified with Chriſt, to be no more than that body of corruption which is lodged in us; and which they think they are warranted in by the Apoſtle's calling it *a body of ſin and death*. And thus (according to them) to be crucified with Chriſt, and conformed to his death, is no more than to have our ſinful luſts and appetites mortified and deſtroyed, and to ceaſe from ſin as a dead man does; which, in truth, is only a pompous and lofty deſcription of a very common thing, turning from ſin to God. So that "crucifying the old man, with his deeds," and "putting off the old man," and "putting on the new man," and "putting "on the Lord Jeſus," are made to mean no more than ceaſing from ſin, and practiſing virtue and holineſs.

It is very true that the Apoſtle, Rom. vi. 11. applies his diſcourſe of the Chriſtian's dying

dying with Chriſt, in an exhortation which very naturally ariſes from it, "to reckon "themſelves dead indeed unto ſin, and alive "unto God through Jeſus Chriſt." And no doubt this is a part of the Chriſtian's conformity to Chriſt, which he is in the ſtrongeſt manner bound to; but it is not ſo properly conformity unto his death, as the native conſequences and effects of it. The Apoſtle had laid the foundation of it deep and ſtrong in the foregoing verſes: nor will his way of laying it ſo much as bear a ſuppoſition, that one can be planted into a likeneſs or conformity unto his reſurrection, without being firſt planted unto the likeneſs of his death, and then the other naturally follows. And this we can never be ſaid to be, nay nor ſo much as to ratify and hold good what he did for us, but by doing as he did: not indeed by faſtening our bodies to a croſs, as his was: that was none of his doing; but what he ſubmitted to, when, according to the determinate counſel of God, he was delivered into the wicked hands of the Jews and Romans: Theſe were the doers of it, and not he; and theſe we have no call

call to be conformed to. But whatever he himſelf did, relating to his crucifixion and death, that we muſt do likewiſe, if ever we are planted into a likeneſs unto him therein. The ſame ſentiments of the juſtice and goodneſs of the divine conſtitution; the ſame reſignation, ſelf-denial, and ſubmiſſion to the divine will, expreſſed there; the ſame acknowledgement of the forfeiture, and willing ſubmiſſion to the puniſhment; renouncing and giving up all connection with the forfeited life, to have no more to do with it in any reſpect: theſe, and the circumſtances attending them in the death of Chriſt, deſerve our moſt ſerious attention; as it will certainly be found one day, that there is no way of entering into eternal life but that one by which he entered, and doing for ourſelves what he did in our name.

(1) We muſt be conformed unto him in the ſentiments he had of the divine law; and particularly, the juſtice and goodneſs of that original conſtitution, by which we were brought under the preſent circumſtances we find mankind in, and particularly the inevitable neceſſity we are under of death. Vain man would be wiſe, though

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in truth he is born "like a wild aſs's colt." And of all his follies, this is the greateſt, that he cannot be reconciled to the ſtation his creator has allotted him in his world. This is a piece of our firſt father's image: he began the fooliſh attempt, to make himſelf wiſer and happier than God had deſigned; and there is hardly any, even the moſt ſtupid, of his poſterity, who do not flatter themſelves, that had they but things at their own diſpoſal, they would provide greatly better for themſelves than God has done. Indeed it is no eaſy matter to be content to be a creature; that is, to live entirely by the grace or free gift of the creator, and to be what he is pleaſed to make them. Our Lord perfectly knew the preſent unhappy circumſtances of mankind: he knew the worſt of it; the law they were under, and the curſe which bound them under death. But all this did not hinder him to take part of the ſame fleſh and blood, and to put himſelf into the very ſame circumſtances; to put himſelf under the ſame law, and that very curſe, which is the moſt formidable part of it. This was an honourable teſtimony given to the juſtice and goodneſs of the

law,

law, and more for the honour of the law-giver than the ſpotleſs obedience of all Adam's race would have been, by how much he was a better judge than they. And until the hearts of men are ſubdued into the ſame ſentiments, to conſent unto the law that it is good, and be perfectly reconciled to it in every part as God has laid it, it is impoſſible they can have any part with Chriſt: they never will be reconciled to his death, much leſs be conformed unto him in it.

(2) Our bleſſed Lord, in the whole of his conduct, eſpecially where his obedience was put to the ſevereſt trial, in his death and ſufferings, ſhowed the moſt perfect ſelf-denial, and the moſt abſolute, reſignation to his Father's will. The Apoſtle gives him this moſt honourable teſtimony, "That he pleaſed not himſelf:" and it was juſtified through the whole courſe of his life. And when the bitter cup was approaching, though he prayed earneſtly, that, if poſſible, it might paſs from him; yet he reſigns himſelf entirely to the will of his Father: "Yet not my will, but "thine be done."

Every body will readily acknowledge in

words, that God is wiſer than man, and infinitely fitter to judge what ſhall be the condition of his creatures: but where is the man who will abide by it in practice, and implicitly reſign himſelf to the divine diſpoſal? To be truly perſuaded, and honeſtly acknowledge one's ſelf nothing without God; though, indeed, it is no more than owning one's ſelf to be his creature; yet we find in fact is a very uncommon attainment. Men have, I know not how, but very unhappily for themſelves, ſtumbled upon a notion, that God has ſo imparted to them a certain proportion of being, that they can ſtand as parties with him; inſiſt upon terms; and not only claim wages, but complain of injuries, when they are not treated as they fancy they ſhould be. Our Lord knew, and every Chriſtian knows, that all this is mere imagination; and though it had been once ſo, yet life, with all its powers, has been forfeited ſo often into the hand of the creator, that it is what they have no title or pretenſions to retain, whenever he ſhall ſee fit to call for it. They can therefore have no expectations nor hopes from it: and therefore ought to follow their

Lord,

Lord, reſigning and giving up themſelves unto his holy, good, and acceptable will, to be what he ſhall by his grace be pleaſed to make them, and to be brought into it in what way he has been pleaſed to appoint.

(3) Our Lord Jeſus, in his death, actually reſigned and gave up Adam's life in him into the hands of juſtice, to be deſtroyed by that curſe which reſted upon it; and, in obedience to the will of God, took up his croſs, the inſtrument of death, when the time appointed by him was come. This is but the conſequence of the former two; and whoſoever hath a mind like Chriſt's in him, will be ſure to follow him in this. A heart reconciled to the law, and reſigned to the divine will, muſt behave like a convicted and ſelf-condemned criminal; juſtify the law; juſtify his judge; and willingly meet the ſtroke of death, which law and juſtice binds him under, whenever his judge ſhall pleaſe to appoint. Thus the Chriſtian takes up his croſs as Chriſt did; and, as he did, has that death to which he has devoted Adam's life always in his eye, as the only thing which can perfectly relieve him from

that unhappy relation, and all the wretched conſequences of it.

This is indeed a hard chapter to the children of Adam, and what none of them can poſſibly bear until they are better taught. And therefore,

(4) This renunciation and reſignation muſt be made upon the ſame principles of faith, and hope of eternal life, upon which our Lord himſelf acted. I need not ſtand to ſhow how our Lord exerciſed the whole of his ſelf-denial and reſignation to the divine will, throughout every period of his life, as well as in his death, upon theſe principles. He profeſſed always to lay down his life, that he might take it up again; John x. 17. If he was lifted up from the earth, he would draw all men after him; John xii. 32. And he repreſents his death but as a leaving this world, in order to return to his Father's houſe. And indeed he had a ſtrong foundation to build upon; the knowledge he had of himſelf, as coming out from the Father, and his Father's irrevocable promiſe and grant of the kingdom.

The true Chriſtian has preciſely the ſame foundations to build his faith and hope

hope of eternal life upon, in the views he has of the perſon of Chriſt, and the promiſe of the Father, ſealed and ratified in his blood. The Apoſtle's reaſoning is unexceptionably ſtrong: "He that ſpared "not his own Son, but gave him up un- "to the death for us all, how ſhall he "not with him alſo freely give us all "things?" In this view, to reſign and give up the life, and all the advantages of it, which we now enjoy, is ſo far from being a hardſhip, that it is the only wiſe thing one can do. It is but changing our holding, or rather a precarious trifling poſſeſſion in a preſent world, for "an in- "heritance incorruptible, undefiled, and "which fadeth not away;" ſuch as Adam would gladly have exchanged his primitive paradiſiacal ſtate for. It is but renouncing Adam, and this pittance of life we have by him, to hold of Chriſt, to bear his image, and to ſhare his glory, his honours, his poſſeſſions, even his very throne. Rev. iii. 21. "To him that o- "vercometh will I grant to ſit with me "in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, "and am ſet down with my Father in "his throne." And,

(5) In

(5) In this view it may not be reckoned grievous, to renounce and give up Adam's way of living, with all that belongs unto his world. The Chriſtian, when he firſt enters upon the croſs of Chriſt, cannot indeed immediately go out of this world, as he did; and therefore, ſo long as he continues in the body, his conformity to Chriſt is not, cannot be perfected; ſomething of a connection with Adam and his world ſtill continues. But he reckons himſelf dead indeed unto ſin; he hath crucified the old man, given him to certain death; he makes it his daily buſineſs to crucify the fleſh, with the affections and luſts, to mortify his members which are on the earth, and to keep under that body where ſin lodges; he is crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to him; and accordingly he looks not at the things which are ſeen, and are temporal; but at thoſe things which are not ſeen, and are eternal. It is a matter of no moment to him, how the world goes with him, or what men think of him; his converſation is in heaven; he is dead to all below; and his life is hid with Chriſt in God; and he knows, that when

when Chriſt ſhall appear, then ſhall he alſo appear with him in glory.

And now, if what has been ſaid be duly conſidered and underſtood, we ſhall need little more to aſſure us of what we next propoſed to ſhew.

II. That the only way a child of Adam can enter upon the Chriſtian life, is by the fellowſhip of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and conformity unto his death; renouncing, and giving up for ever, the life he derives from Adam, with all that belongs to it.

We have already ſeen how our bleſſed Lord laid down the terms of diſcipleſhip, without which no man could have any benefit by him, viz. that they muſt "deny themſelves, take up their croſs, and "follow him." We have ſeen likewiſe how the Apoſtle Paul himſelf entered upon the Chriſtian life, in a preciſe conformity with this eſtabliſhed rule, being *crucified with Chriſt*. And this was no ſingularity in him beyond others; for "all that are "Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the "affections and luſts;" and "have put "off the old man with his deeds." "If "any

"any man be in Chriſt, he is a new crea-
"ture: old things are paſſed away, and
"all things are become new." 2 Cor. v. 17. And is it to be imagined that the way is altered ſince? It has fared indeed with the goſpel as it commonly does with the law; when men find they cannot come up to it, they try to bring it down to them. Since Chriſtianity became the faſhionable religion in the world, numbers claim the name who have nothing of the thing: and that their pretenſions may have ſome colour, they perſuade themſelves, or perhaps only try to make others believe, that Chriſtianity is no ſuch thing as theſe high expreſſions ſeem to import. But however men may amuſe themſelves, and others, for a time, the thing will ſtand juſt as it does.

But it is not merely on the ſtrength of words and phraſes that this great truth ſtands. Take this away, and the whole conſtitution of grace, the entire frame of the new creation, muſt either be mere fable and amuſement, or at beſt ſomething altogether ſuperfluous. Chriſt himſelf has lived and died to no purpoſe; or, which is the ſame thing, for a purpoſe which might

might have been as well anſwered without him. If there is no more neceſſary to enter us into the ſpiritual and eternal world, and to qualify a child of Adam for the buſineſs and enjoyments of that life, than to have our temper and way of thinking altered, and formed into a right taſte of moral beauty and goodneſs, as ſome are pleaſed to ſpeak; the child of Adam might have been an heir of glory, had it not been for the unhappy circumſtances in which his creator placed him; and he may be ſo ſtill, if he will only attend to the nature of things, and form himſelf upon thoſe rules of virtue which are founded there. And thus the goſpel is no more but a republication of the law of nature by Chriſt, the great prophet and teacher ſent from God; or at moſt a new law publiſhed by him, by which every one who will, may ſecure to himſelf the poſſeſſion of eternal life. But the whole buſineſs of his mediation, as repreſented in the Old Teſtament by ſacrifices, and other parts of the temple-worſhip, and the whole of his headſhip, as repreſented by the firſt man, muſt go for nothing: there is no place left for them.

But could we perceive what is indeed the nature of things, as they are fixed and eſtabliſhed by the great creator; what life is, how it is begun, preſerved, and maintained; what a preſent life is, and what we are who poſſeſs it; what proſpects and hopes we can juſtly form to ourſelves: if we knew who Chriſt is, what place and ſtation he holds in the world, and particularly in relation to us; what that life is which he has in himſelf, and communicates unto the children of men; with other things which ſtand connected with theſe: every view, and every circumſtance, would contribute, in its meaſure, to aſſure us, that the life we have from Adam, and that which is by Chriſt, can by no means ſtand together, but muſt mutually weaken, and in the end deſtroy one another. I cannot propoſe to lay the whole evidence together here; that would require a more perfect knowledge of the myſteries of God than I can pretend to; and the little which lies fairly before us would take up too much room: I ſhall therefore content myſelf at preſent with ſuch as lie moſt obvious; and more will occur when we come of purpoſe to diſcourſe on the

the Chriſtian life, as the Apoſtle deſcribes it in the following part of the verſe. And here,

1. The analogy of nature preſents us with ſomething more than a preſumption, in the daily changes we obſerve in the lower degrees of life in plants and animals, thoſe eſpecially which we call inſects, and the ſeveral ſpecies of flies which fall every day under our notice. The mother-plant, when it has ſhed its ſeed, periſhes and dies; the ſeed, when it begins to root, periſhes likewiſe; and out of its ruins a new plant riſes. In that viciſſitude the face of the earth has been yearly renewed ſince the creation. The ſame is the caſe of animals, which ſpend themſelves in the production of new ones; and theſe, from a very low ſtate of life while in embryo, are entered into a new and quite different ſtate when they are brought into the open air, and there grow up to perfection. The little unſightly worm or maggot crawls about for a ſeaſon, until dying, and periſhing to that kind of life, it comes out a beautiful fly, the wonder of the creation. Throughout the whole of nature, the new form deſtroys the old;

and the creature ceaſes to be what it formerly was.

This argument has yet the more weight, as we find it made uſe of by our Lord and his apoſtles for illuſtrating the point we are upon. Our Lord tells his hearers, as a good reaſon for his ſubmitting to death, that "unleſs a grain of wheat fall into "the ground, and die, it abideth alone: "but dying, brings forth much fruit;" John xii. 24. And the Apoſtle Paul, by the ſame image, evinces the difference there is between the preſent ſtate of human bodies, and what they ſhall be at the reſurrection. And from the way of animals entering upon a preſent life, men eſpecially, we have the way of entering into the ſpiritual and eternal world deſcribed, by being begotten and born again of a quite different ſeed; and therefore into a proportionally different life and being: "That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; "and that which is born of the Spirit, is "ſpirit," ſaid our Lord, in his conference with Nicodemus; which indeed is the foundation of the whole New-Teſtament language on this ſubject. "The fleſh luſt-"eth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit a-"gainſt

" gainſt the fleſh ;" and theſe two are ſo contrary, that as fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, the fleſh muſt be deſtroyed, and the very bodies of believers muſt be raiſed up ſpiritual ones. 1 Cor. xv. 44.

2. This ſuggeſts unto us another conſideration, the truth of which every man may feel in himſelf, as the Spirit of God has atteſted it, viz. That the life of Chriſt is never perfected in us, until that which we have from Adam is entirely deſtroyed. What we call *death* completes the ruin of a preſent life, diſſolves all our relations and connections with a preſent world; and the fleſh and blood we received in the courſe of natural generation are no more: nothing remains but that duſt out of which man was originally framed. And it is not till theſe vile bodies are changed, and faſhioned like unto our Lord's glorious body, that we enter on the perfect enjoyment of that life, which is indeed begun here in the ſpiritual life, or the life of faith; but only begun, being at beſt, while we remain here, a ſtate of infancy and nonage. Thus we have the ſpiritual life repreſented in the ſame terms which diſtinguiſh

diſtinguiſh the ſeveral ſtages of the natural one. The Lord Jeſus is the ſtandard, the meaſure of the human ſtature in the ſpiritual and eternal world, the perfect man; but there are babes in Chriſt, young men, and fathers; 1 John ii. 12. 13.; weak and ſtrong; and innumerable degrees of ſtrength and ſtature. But the full perfection is reſerved to another world. Why? So long as fleſh continues, it will be luſting againſt the Spirit.

Every man who will be at pains to obſerve it, may find an image of this in himſelf, in his very frame and conſtitution. There are two principles in man, as he is compounded of body and ſpirit, *Senſe*, and *Reaſon;* and each of theſe has its different objects; very different indeed when reaſon arrives at any tolerable ſtrength. Theſe two divide the man ſo between them, and each exerts its appetites and cravings with ſuch force and vigour, that they are often miſtaken for the two very different principles, which the Apoſtle calls *fleſh* and *ſpirit*, the old and new man. It is notorious how ſenſe ſinks, debaſes, and enſlaves reaſon, and thus deſtroys its force and vigour. On the other

ther hand, as reaſon recovers ſtrength, and takes the leading of the man, ſenſe is deſpiſed, and all its cravings and ſolicitations entirely neglected. The man becomes dead to theſe things. But both ſenſe and reaſon, in our imperfect views of things, very frequently unite againſt faith, and would be by much too ſtrong for it, were it not powerfully ſupported by a ſuperior principle, "the Spirit of life "in Chriſt Jeſus:" but ſo far as the divine life prevails, and the immortal ſeed of the word of truth grows up to its ſtrength, the man, of courſe, becomes dead to both, and brings them under proper ſubjection. And juſt ſo far as he comes to be led by the Spirit, that is, ſo far as he advances in the life of Chriſt, ſo far he muſt become dead to the life of Adam.

3. There is ſomething very obſervable in the human conſtitution as it now is, which will go a great way to determine the queſtion. So long as any one is perfectly pleaſed with his ſituation, he will never entertain a thought of another; neither will he be prevailed with to alter it, until he be convinced that there is ſomething about it that needs to be amended.

Now

Now Adam's children are perfectly made for a preſent world; they enter into it, and are inſenſibly formed upon it, before they are capable of knowing any better: and ſo long as they are pleaſed with their preſent enjoyments, they want no other. If God would but let them alone, and not diſturb their enjoyment, they would look no farther. They prefer heaven indeed to hell, becauſe they have heard that this laſt is a place of torment; but could they have their wiſh, they would prefer this world to them both.

This is a matter of experience, and what we have inſtances of before us every day, both in ourſelves and others. We can be amuſed and pleaſed with what, even in reſpect of a preſent world, we certainly know to be the moſt inſignificant trifles; while we cannot be entertained for the ſhorteſt time, nay cannot keep from wearying, while we are confined to hear of nothing but God, and how he intends to diſpoſe of us, and the proviſion he has made for eternity. What can be the language of this? Can it be any other than this; that men are naturally ſo pleaſed with this preſent world, that the moſt inſignificant

ſignificant trifles belonging to it, are reckoned preferable to all that Chriſt has to give in balance? And ſo long as they continue of this mind, eternal life lies by neglected, with all that belongs to it. But,

4. So long as Adam's life continues in its ſtrength, unmortified, and unrenounced; that is, ſo long as men continue ſtrangers to the croſs of Chriſt, as has been explained; it is impoſſible they can live at all: death ſtands, by the ordinance of God, entailed upon that life; the *curſe* reſts on it; and that, as has been obſerved, never fails to bring the wretched ſubject it reſts upon to utter perdition. The death of Chriſt has indeed opened a way by which men may be delivered; but even that can only ſave them, by their forſaking their preſent ſtanding in Adam, and renouncing for ever that life which is held by ſo terrible a tenure. Until this is done, it is directly contrary to law that they ſhould live; and it is the ſtupideſt preſumption that can enter into the heart of man, to entertain the remoteſt hope that way. The law ſtands clear againſt them; and it is a deſperate proſpect, which can-

not take place unleſs God make himſelf a liar, and ſet aſide his own conſtitution. The caſe is too glaring to need any illuſtration, or indeed to be capable of any: and aſtoniſhing it is to think how men avoid the conviction. There is no way of accounting for it but one; and that gives a further evidence of the neceſſity there is of throwing up this accurſed thing. It is this:

5. That all Adam's children are really, and in ſtricteſt propriety, in a ſtate of death, and perfectly deſtitute of ſpiritual and eternal life. This is, in the very nature of things, a neceſſary conſequence of the former. Our ignorance of what is life, and what is death, deceives us moſt miſerably. As we know no life but that ſhadow of it which we enjoy in theſe bodies, we fooliſhly form our notions of death by what puts an end to that: and upon this fooliſh bottom ſtand many of our boaſted demonſtrations, which have been ſpeciouſly employed to infer, that ſpirits cannot die: the great ſupport of infidelity in our times. A creature that cannot periſh is an aſtoniſhing paradox. We are well aſſured the contrary is true;

that

that every living creature may die, and certainly muſt whenever the almighty creator withdraws that power which held it in being.

No words can be invented more expreſs than thoſe made uſe of by the apoſtles, to expreſs the abſolute deadneſs of mankind in their preſent natural ſtate, in relation to God, and ſpiritual and unſeen things. Had they ſaid no more, than that "the natural man is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins," ſomething might have been pleaded for a figurative meaning: but when we are told in plain terms, that "he neither receives, nor can know the "things of God, becauſe they are ſpiri-"tually diſcerned;" and when our Lord aſſures his diſciples, "that they could do "nothing without him;" that "fleſh "and blood," all the powers of the natural man, could not diſcover ſo much as that he was "the Chriſt, the Son of the "living God;" when he ſpeaks of men every where as deſtitute of life until he beſtow it; what a preſumptuous infatuation muſt it be for men to ſay, thoſe things are not ſo; that they have a life already, and need nothing more but to

have it lengthened out to make them immortal?

But this is not a thing of that kind which needs either metaphyſical ſubtilty, or any ſtrained conſequences, to ſupport it. It is what every man carries the evidence of in his own boſom, and which the ſlighteſt attention cannot but diſcover, though he had never been told it. Let him but try what he can make of God, or the ſpiritual unſeen world; what conceptions he can form of him, and what he can propoſe from his hand; how he can live upon him, and find his pleaſure in beholding his glory; theſe are the foundations on which the ſpiritual life ſtands, and the moſt native and neceſſary exerciſes of it: and where is the man who can ſay, that theſe things are natural to him? as they certainly would be, was he poſſeſſed of the life whereof theſe are the natural actings. Our philoſophers indeed boaſt themſelves much in the advantageous circumſtances they ſtand in, with the Bible in their hands; but one of the wiſeſt of their predeceſſors found himſelf quite out of his depth, when he was put to ſay, what God is. Every thing about man, the whole of his

his conduct and behaviour, proclaim him alive indeed to a preſent world; and his activity in the matters of it give full evidence; but dead as a ſtone to any thing that relates to the ſpiritual and eternal worlds. And muſt not this dead ſtate, and that ſhadow of life we poſſeſs, by which we are ſo wildly deluded and miſled, be renounced, given up, and put an end to, before we can live to God? But,

6. The finiſhing evidence of this is ſtill behind: It is the abſolute inconſiſtency, and direct oppoſition, there is between the life we derive from Adam, and that which we have by Jeſus Chriſt. So inconſiſtent are they, that they cannot poſſibly ſtand together; but as much as one of them gains, the other, of neceſſity, loſes, until the one or the other is entirely overpowered and deſtroyed.

We have already obſerved much of this on the former heads; in the conflict there is between the two oppoſite principles of fleſh and ſpirit in the children of God, until the death of the body, the laſt ſtroke at Adam's life, ſets them at liberty for ever, and enters them into a ſtate of perfection; in the curſe that reſts upon Adam's life

life in us, which is directly oppoſite to the bleſſing brought in by Chriſt; and in the ſpiritual death, in which all Adam's children are buried until they are quickened by Chriſt. But there are yet other circumſtances, by which the oppoſition and inconſiſtency will appear yet more glaringly manifeſt, if indeed any thing can be more ſo. And,

(1) We may compare them with reſpect to their intention and deſign, the ſeveral purpoſes reſpectively they were deſigned to anſwer. And here we need not ſtrain our faculties, by attempting to enter the unapproachable receſſes of the divine counſels and deſigns. What he has revealed is abundantly ſufficient for us, eſpecially as it ſtands ſupported by plain facts, which fall under every body's obſervation. The life we have from Adam we are ſure was never deſigned to reach beyond the limits of a preſent world, nor to qualify and fit us for any thing but what belongs to the inhabitants of it, and to receive what further light and life the creator ſhall ſee proper to impart. This is Chriſt's buſineſs to give, to open to us the ſecrets of the ſpiritual and eternal worlds, and to furniſh

furniſh us with life and powers ſuch as are proper for the inhabitants there.

(2) In the riſe, and way of conveyance. God is the fountain of life; but communicates it in what meaſures he ſees proper, either immediately and directly, or by ſuch mediums and conveyances as he ſees fit and proper. There were only two of mankind received it immediately, viz. the *firſt* and *ſecond* Adams. The *firſt* conveys in the courſe of natural generation; the *ſecond*, by regeneration and the new birth. Under one or other of theſe heads we muſt ſtand; under both we cannot; becauſe,

(3) Of the different and directly oppoſite tenures by which theſe different lives are held: the firſt, by the original law; the ſecond, by the grant and conſtitution of grace. And though an apoſtle had not told us, we might have known, that law and grace are abſolutely incompatible. The man that puts his life upon the law, renounces grace, and leaves no room for it: and he who chuſes to live by grace, renounces his holding by law. If we compare the firſt Adam's grant, by which all his poſterity hold life, with the grant of grace in Chriſt, the oppoſition will be

yet

yet more evident. The firſt was limited, and only conditional, ſuited exactly to its intention; and accordingly carries in it certain death. The ſecond, however it ſtood on terms to be performed by him who received them, juſt as the other did; yet theſe terms being perfectly fulfilled, the grant comes perfectly free and unlimited, and therefore ſure and irrevocable, to all that are in him. And in conſequence of this,

(4) Their reſpective ways of living are likewiſe abſolutely inconſiſtent. And tho' a multitude of circumſtances might be brought under this head, I confine myſelf to two, viz. that all Adam's children are cut off from God, and have nothing to live on but the creature; and that, being ſtill under law, they can deal with God in no other way. By the firſt, they follow the footſteps of their firſt father, ſetting up the creature, in oppoſition to God, as the ſubject of their happineſs and enjoyment: and by the ſecond, they are obliged to deal with God in a way, which, as matters ſtand, muſt certainly iſſue in death, and their utter deſtruction.

I need ſay nothing upon the firſt, which

is

is the only way a child of Adam can live. God has given the earth unto the children of men: and there they have their portion. The Apoſtles James and John have determined the oppoſition. "Know ye not, "that the friendſhip of this world is en-"mity againſt God?" Jam. iv. 4. "If "any man love the world, the love of the "Father is not in him; 1 John ii. 15. The Apoſtle Paul joins his teſtimony: "The carnal mind is enmity againſt God;" Rom. viii. 7. And in their circumſtances it is ſimply impoſſible it can be otherwiſe. Chriſt's buſineſs is to ſlay the enmity; and his life, in all the exerciſes and enjoyments of it, is the love of God.

With reſpect to the other, as there is a ſtated oppoſition between law and grace, the way of living under them muſt be oppoſite too. In the one fear, in the other love, are the leading and influencing principles. And perfect love, we know, caſts out fear. And as fear has torment, and keeps the poor man in conſtant bondage, it muſt ſtand in direct oppoſition to that freedom and liberty which is the peculiar privilege of the children of God.

But there is ſtill ſomething worſe in

their way of living who are under the law; as it leads them into a way directly inconſiſtent with that which God has choſen, and with the very deſign of ſetting up Chriſt at the head of the new creation. It leads men off from that way of living which only can become a creature, much more a ſinful and a criminal one, viz. the grace and free favour of the Creator and Redeemer; to ſtand upon terms with the great ſovereign of heaven; to recommend themſelves unto his favour by their obedience; and thus to ſeek juſtification as it were by works of law, and their own doings.

(5) I only add another inſtance of this oppoſition, that in a preſent life, and by the firſt creation-conſtitution, man has all his powers in his own hand, and has no hope nor ground to expect any further aſſiſtance; and yet he is vain enough to imagine himſelf very well provided, while, in truth, he is worſe provided for anſwering the great purpoſes of life than any other being whatſoever. In the new creation, matters ſtand juſt in the reverſe. The man in Chriſt feels himſelf nothing; mere emptineſs, and utterly incapable of any thing,

thing, but to receive and take in the proviſion made for him in Chriſt. In *him* his life, all his powers, and all the materials of his happineſs, ſo dwell, that indeed it is not the man that lives, but Chriſt that lives in him; and his whole exerciſe is to truſt him for all, to expect every thing from him, and to love him as he would do his own life if he had any other.

And this points out to us yet another oppoſition between faith on one ſide, which is the great and only mean of the Chriſtian life, and ſenſe on the other. I ſay ſenſe, for that is the ſole principle upon which the children of Adam act, becauſe nothing can be brought under their obſervation but in this way; and all that reaſon can do, a noble principle as it is, is to make the beſt of what ſenſe has diſcovered. It is not in its nature to make any new diſcoveries; it can only proceed on ſuch diſcoveries as are preſented to it: and thus it is kept groveling on the ſurface of this groſs material world, until faith comes to its relief, and by opening up ſpiritual and eternal things, furniſheth it with infinitely more noble buſineſs.

Upon the whole, we may conclude,

that the only way to become a Chriſtian is that which the Apoſtle took, to be *crucified with Chriſt.* Not only to forſake our former ways and courſes, our oppoſition to the laws and commandments of God; to give over ſinning, and to turn to God: all this muſt be done; but when all this is done, it will not make one a Chriſtian. We muſt, if ever we are ſuch, be entered into Chriſt, and partake with him in his life: we muſt be conformed unto him, and bear his image. But this we can never do, without renouncing and giving up all inconſiſtent relations and dependencies whatſoever. We muſt enter into life the ſame way he did, by dying to a preſent world, and all our connections with it: and that can never be done, but by renouncing and giving up with Adam's life, and his way of living; by acknowledging ourſelves to be, what we certainly are, whether we acknowledge it or not, nothing without God, and ſomething worſe than nothing, ſinners, and impotent rebels againſt his crown and dignity; confeſſing that we are abſolutely at his mercy, and that we cannot enjoy a moment's reprieve but by grace, pure ſovereign grace,

as

as it is held forth unto us in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

And now let us reflect a little on the view we have been taking of the croſs of Chriſt, as the only entrance into the Chriſtian life. And,

1. It appears, that they are egregiouſly miſtaken, who count it ſo eaſy a matter to become a Chriſtian that it may be done when they will; or that they may even ſtumble into it, they know not how, or in what way. Our Lord's words expreſs ſomething that cannot be put in practice without the tendereſt feelings: To deny ones ſelf; to be ſtript, nay, to ſtrip one's ſelf, at once, of every thing we have to pleaſe or value ourſelves upon, even all the pleaſures and enjoyments to which we have been accuſtomed; to break off all conformity to and connection with the world; to renounce the neareſt, the deareſt, the moſt affecting relations, poſſeſſions, nay, life itſelf; and to take our venture with Chriſt, and find our all in him: To do as Abraham did on the divine call, when he went out from his father's houſe, his country, and poſſeſſions, to a place which

which God promiſed to ſhew him: "He "went out not knowing whither he "went." He knew well what he left; and ſo does the man who intends to be a Chriſtian; but what is before him is all a ſecret. "It doth not yet appear," ſaith the Apoſtle John, "what we ſhall be;" but as Abraham did, ſo do all true Chriſtians; they ſet out upon the call of God, and are content to truſt themſelves to his leading: "They take up their croſs, and "follow him."

Theſe are ſuch hard ſayings, that the men of the world, the children of Adam, never have been, and moſt aſſuredly never will be able to bear them: and yet many ſuch will needs be called Chriſtians; and thence have ariſen almoſt all the errors and corruptions that have been brought into Chriſtianity. To keep themſelves in countenance, they are forced to attempt a coalition of the two oppoſite intereſts, God, and the world; and to reconcile the love of God with the love of the world; to graft religion, the Chriſtian life, and the hope of immortality, and the world to come, upon the old withered ſtock of Adam's life, and accommodate the grace of

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the goſpel to the old law-plan, making faith and works joint recommendations to the divine favour and reward. And thus, while they pretend to take off the diſcouragements which ſeem to attend Chriſtianity, by modeling Chriſt's yoke to their own humour, and making it light and eaſy, in another manner than ever he intended it; they deſtroy its beauty and ſtrength at once, and leave it a common lifeleſs thing, in nothing different from the common productions of human ſervice, which never could anſwer the purpoſes they were deſigned for.

Our Lord's yoke is indeed eaſy, and his burden light. But what makes it ſo, is that every thing which the world reckon the greateſt hardſhip of all, viz. Entering upon the croſs of Chriſt, and throwing off at once every thing that might be a burden, or make the commandments of God grievous to us. Nothing can do this but overcoming the world, 1 John v. 4.; and there is no way of overcoming it, but by breaking our connection with, and dependence on it. By the croſs of Chriſt, thoſe who are made conformable unto his death, are crucified

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to the world, and the world is crucified to them. From that time none of theſe things can move them. The allurements and terrors of the world equally loſe their force; becauſe the Chriſtian certainly knows he can neither be a gainer by the one, nor a loſer by the other. Nay, and when the world has done its worſt againſt him, by deſtroying not only the preſent comforts of life, but life itſelf, it then doth him the beſt ſervice, by ridding him at once of the body of ſin and death he groaned ſo much under.

2. Here we may ſee the divine proceedings with mankind, in an eaſy, agreeable, and conſiſtent light; very different indeed from the fanciful views of men; but ſuch as gives the faireſt and moſt intereſting views at once of the boundleſs wiſdom and goodneſs of our heavenly Father, and at the ſame time of what is the real ſtate and condition of mankind, both Chriſtians and others, in a preſent world.

Much pains have been taken to make the ways of God appear equal to man. Many ſuppoſitions have been made to clear his proceedings from the imputation of injuſtice, or want of kindneſs to his creatures;

tures: but had men been contented to take God's ways as they are, that is, as himſelf has ordered a record to be made of them, and forborn loading him with what it does not appear he ever did, or deſigned to do, they would never have needed any of their apologies.

From what we have obſerved, it appears how kind it was to mankind in general, to put our firſt father into the circumſtances in which he was originally placed in paradiſe; and no leſs ſo, to ſuffer him to fall into the condition wherein mankind now are. Had it been otherwiſe, we ſhould have wanted the inſtructive and ſenſible documents of the reality of thoſe ſpiritual and eternal things of which theſe were the figures, and how impoſſible it was for man to live but by God and his grace. The groundleſs fancies men have entertained of that primitive innocence, as if it was the ſtate of human perfection; and the regret they expreſs upon the loſs of it, as the ruin of mankind; and the plan they form of man's recovery by Jeſus Chriſt, as a ſort of after-thought, to retrieve the error, or at leaſt to fill up the blank made in the firſt creation, and for

which there never would have been any occaſion, if man had done his duty as he ought and might have done: theſe, and the ill-founded gueſſes at what ſhould have been the condition of mankind if Adam had not fallen, have created all the difficulty; whereas nothing can be more evident from the divine record, and the facts, as they ſtand open to every one's view, than that the whole paradiſiacal ſtate was no more than a very wiſe introduction of what the great creator deſigned to be the permanent ſtate of mankind, whereby they ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from all his other creatures.

That God deſigned this for the permanent ſtate of mankind, cannot be doubted, when we find, that this, in fact, is the eſtabliſhed order, That men ſhould be born, and live, and die, in a preſent world; but for a greatly higher end than any of the concerns of a preſent life. It was the new creation, to be raiſed out of the ruins of this, which God had mainly in view; and of this we may be perfectly aſſured by the perſon he has ſet at the head of it, ſo infinitely greater than the firſt man. There the permanent ſtate of mankind is fixed, in a

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conformity and likeneſs to their glorious head; to live with him in the perfect poſſeſſion and enjoyment of eternal life, where neither ſin nor death can enter, nor any of that afflicting train of cares and ſorrows which attend them.

The ſtate of mankind, then, in a preſent life, is that of candidates and probationers, if you pleaſe to call them ſo, for that future ſtate. Life and immortality are brought to light in the goſpel; even the conſtitution of grace, publiſhed from the beginning of the world, and the firſt entrance of ſin and death: and the only point we have to determine upon (a very momentous one indeed) is, whether we will content ourſelves with this life we derive from the firſt Adam, and chuſe to make our beſt of the powers and abilities we have; or renounce theſe altogether, with the life they belong to, and follow Chriſt to take our lot with him. And though nothing be truer, than that "without him we can do nothing;" it is as true, that "we are complete in him, and can do "all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening "us." And if there is added a denunciation of the ſevereſt and moſt exemplary

puniſhment againſt the deſpiſers of grace, thoſe obſtinate rebels who will not have God and his Anointed to reign over them, who will not live, unleſs they can live independent on God, and, as it were, in ſpight of him, in a way that he has declared they ſhall not live in; what fault can be found in the whole? They who will take God's way, and ſubmit to his gracious conſtitution, are abundantly provided for; and thoſe who will not, have none to blame but themſelves. But,

3. If it be ſo, as certainly it is, that the only way of entering into Chriſt's life is by his croſs; approving and ratifying what he did there in our name, and renouncing and giving up the life we derive from Adam, with all that belongs to it; we have before us one ſure way of trying the truth of our pretenſions, and a moſt ſerious call, ſeconded with the ſtrongeſt and moſt intereſting motives that can enter into the heart of man, to make uſe of it with the utmoſt ſerioufneſs and impartiality. It is a matter of the greateſt moment; our all for time and eternity depends on it. It is a matter in which multitudes without number deceive themſelves.

ſelves into irretrievable deſtruction; and yet the caſe lies ſo plainly before us, that it is aſtoniſhing how any one can be deceived. But what will not ignorance and partiality do, eſpecially when ſupported by love to a preſent world? We have ſeen how inconſiſtent this is with the love of God, which the life of Chriſt neceſſarily leads to. We will not ſtand to enter into particulars, which may be eaſily ſupplied from what we had occaſion to obſerve on the import of *being crucified with Chriſt*, and the Chriſtian's *fellowſhip* in his ſufferings, and *conformity* unto his death.

I only obſerve, that there are what they call the loweſt marks of grace, which, though well deſigned for the relief of weak diſtreſſed Chriſtians, have been moſt miſerably abuſed to the ruin of many. Surely there can be no grace but in Chriſt Jeſus; and unleſs "Chriſt Jeſus be in a "man," the Apoſtle aſſures us, he is a reprobate, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And if Chriſt be in any man, the body is dead becauſe of ſin, Rom. viii. 10.; or, in other words, "their old man is crucified with him;" "for they that are Chriſt's, have cruci- "fied the fleſh, with the luſts and affec- "tions."

" tions." It will not therefore, it cannot, be any mark of grace at all, that men are ſo far pleaſed with the croſs of Chriſt, as to reſt their hopes of pardon and eternal life on his ſacrifice and ſufferings. That is, right ſo far as it goes; but if this were all, Chriſt would be made the miniſter of ſin indeed; and his croſs, inſtead of being the deſtruction of ſin, would be an encouragement to ſin with hopes of impunity; which is the very odious imputation with which ignorant men load the doctrine of grace; not adverting, that none can have any benefit by his ſacrifice, but they who enter into his death, and not only approve of, but join him in, what he there did, renouncing, and giving up for ever, into the hands of juſtice, that devoted life they have from Adam, with all the connections and concerns of it; arming themſelves " with the ſame mind which was in Chriſt, " when he ſuffered for them in the fleſh," 1 Pet. iv. 1. What that mind was we have already ſeen; and an armour it is of ſuch proof, that not the devil and the world combined, with all the natural and contracted corruption that is in us, can poſſibly prevail againſt it. This is the low-

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eſt mark that can be admitted; and where it is wanting, we muſt be very poſitive, that that condition is not to be reſted in; becauſe our Lord has ſaid, that without it no man can be his diſciple.

4. We have here before us the beſt directory ever was, or ever will be, compoſed for ſuch as would be Chriſtians indeed. This is the only door by which they can have admittance; but ſuch a door as enters them upon a road, wherein a wayfaring man, though never ſo much a fool, cannot poſſibly err; being put under the conduct and guidance of one who will be ſure to give a good account of him at laſt. It may be worth while to ſtop a little to ſurvey the advantages and neceſſity of it. And here,

(1) I ſay, it is the only way by which one can enter into the way of life. It might be ſufficient for proving this, that it is the only way God has authoriſed; and ſurely it belongs to him to determine what way every creature of his ſhall ſubſiſt. But we are not left to bare authority. It is the only way whereby one can enter into Chriſt, and be made either partaker with him, or conformable to him. It is the

the only way whereby we can get out of our connection with the firſt Adam, and that curſe which reſts upon his life: that is to ſay, it is the only way by which one can get out from under certain and unavoidable death, and be ſure of a happy reſurrection. For,

(2) If we are planted into the likeneſs of Chriſt's death, we ſhall moſt certainly be planted into the likeneſs of his reſurrection, Rom. vi. 5. And did we know what that was, we ſhould not only ſacrifice that poor pittance of life that we have from Adam, with all that belongs to it; and all that we can, not to ſay expect from it, but what we can poſſibly enjoy in it, though we were to be made ſole lords and proprietors of the univerſe. For though we were poſſeſſed of our firſt father's paradiſe, and perfection there, all theſe are but trifles, things of nothing, when compared with the Chriſtian's proſpect: "It does not indeed appear as yet "what we ſhall be; but we know, that "when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like "him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is." Like HIM! like unto the exalted Son of God! Who would not deny themſelves, take

take up their croſs, and follow him, on ſuch a proſpect? What a nothing is it we renounce? What an unſpeakable weight of glory is before us? But,

(3) Our encouragement doth not all lie beyond the grave, in the world to come; by this we become immediately and directly diſciples and followers of Chriſt. It is an entrance into the way that leads to the glory of another world. It is an entrance into him who is "the way, the "truth, and the life." He is the reſurrection and the life; and theſe it actually enters the man into. It is the fellowſhip of his ſufferings; and that makes the fruits of them ſure. It is not renouncing life, but exchanging holdings; to hold of Chriſt inſtead of holding by Adam; and exchanging a poor, worthleſs, periſhing life, for the beſt, the moſt durable, and eternal. It is uniting with the Son of God, and by him with God himſelf, the fountain of all life, and light, and fulneſs; the higheſt honour a creature can be capable of.

(4) It is taking part with Chriſt, approving and ratifying what he did in our name and behalf; and thus it is but a piece of common honeſty. And indeed,

as matters ſtand, we muſt either adhere to him, and ſtand by what he did, or renounce and diſclaim him, and all part and intereſt in him: and, to ſay nothing of the madneſs of ſuch a conduct, and the danger that attends it, what an ungenerous, baſe, and ungrateful thing is it, to deſert the bleſſed Son of God when he has done ſo much for us! "Ye know the grace of "our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he "was rich, yet for our ſakes he became "poor, that we through his poverty "might be rich." And when he has acted ſo infinitely to our advantage, what can be ſaid for our neglect, but that there was a price put into the hand of fools?

(5) It is arming ourſelves with the ſame mind that was in him. To be of the ſame mind with the eternal Wiſdom of God is certainly no ſmall honour. It is a part, and a very valuable one, of our conformity to him; but it is ſuch a conformity unto him as furniſhes complete armour againſt all the temptations and trials we can poſſibly meet with. It gives the victory over the world at once, making it a dead thing to us, by our dying to it; and that kills at once all worldly affections and luſts

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which war againſt the Spirit. When the world was crucified to the Apoſtle, and he to the world, it loſt all its charms and terrors at once, and he went on with the ſame eaſy unconcernedneſs under the loſs of all things, as if he had not been in the body. And,

(6) to mention no more, This makes all the commandments of God eaſy and agreeable; takes off every weight which hangs upon the ſoul, preſſing it down to the earth, and marring its heavenly converſation. It raiſes the Chriſtian's courage and reſolution, by the ſafety of his ſituation; as knowing how much greater HE is who is with him, than all that are or ever can be againſt him. And thus he goes on, in the prophet Habakkuk's ſpirit: "Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, "neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the "labour of the olives ſhall fail, and the "fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall "be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall "be no herd in the ſtalls: yet I will re-"joice in the Lord." Nay, when "the "heavens are rolled together as a ſcroll, "and the elements melt with fervent "heat, when the earth, with all the in-

" habitants of it, are diſſolved," he can ſtand upon the ruins, and ſay, I have loſt nothing; ſtill I can " rejoice in the Lord, " and joy in the God of my ſalvation."

DISSERTATION II.

Nevertheleſs I live: yet not I; but Chriſt liveth in me.

WE have, in the foregoing diſſertation, been conſidering the way which God has appointed, and by which the children of Adam muſt enter upon the life of Chriſt, viz. their being *crucified with him;* that is, renouncing and giving up, as an accurſed thing, the life derived from the earthly man, that the body may return to the duſt, according to the righteous ſentence pronounced upon our firſt father, whereby the preſent condition of mankind was unalterably fixed; which ſentence therefore ſhall one day be executed, whether men conſent to it or not.

But as conformity to Chriſt in his death includes, among other things, the ſame faith and hope which he had; the hope of

of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, has promiſed before the world began: ſo they who are planted into a conformity unto his death, are at the ſame time planted into a conformity unto his reſurrection. As they have hope in their death, they are not made aſhamed. They have not indeed the ſame life reſtored which was given up; that would be but reſtoring them to their former unhappy ſituation, and little or nothing to their advantage: but they have a life, in all the views that can be taken of it, infinitely better, by which they are entered into that ſtate of higheſt perfection in Chriſt which God deſigned that order of creatures for.

There is ſomething very ſingular, but ſuperlatively high, in the account the Apoſtle here gives of it as he found it in himſelf.

It was *the life by which he lived;* and which he was ſo perfectly pleaſed with, that he counted all that belongs to a preſent life, and a preſent world, but loſs and dung compared with it.

But at the ſame time it was ſuch a life that, in proper ſpeech, he could not call it his own; he therefore corrects himſelf:

Yet

Yet not I. The honour of it was too high for him to aſſume.

And having thus diſclaimed any property in this life, he deſcribes it as it really is, *Chriſt liveth in me.*

And as it is here that the whole ſecret of the Chriſtian life lies; if we can but get at the proper meaning of the Apoſtle's expreſſion, —— How *Chriſt lives in the Chriſtian*,—— ſo as to be aſſured of the full import and real intention of it, we ſhall have a fair and conſiſtent view of the eſſential and diſtinguiſhing nature of Chriſtianity; which exalts it above every thing that hath ever paſſed under the name of religion, and even above that kind of Chriſtianity which is to be found among thoſe, who though they acknowledge the New Teſtament in general, yet will not ſubmit to the deciſions and determinations of it, unleſs they are modelled to their own taſte.

And here we muſt remember to carry along with us, what we obſerved in our entrance on this ſubject, concerning the nature of life in general, and the ſeveral ſpecies and kinds of it, according to the different powers beſtowed by the creator; the

the different ways of living the ſeveral ranks of creatures are made for, and the ſeveral purpoſes which they are deſigned to anſwer, in the appropriated ſtations aſſigned them throughout the univerſe; how impoſſible it is for them to live, that is, either to maintain or exert their reſpective powers, by any other means, or in any other manner, than that which their creator has appointed them; that while they are alive in one way, they are dead to all the reſt; and whenever they attempt to ſupport themſelves in any other way, and neglect what belongs to their ſtation, and the ſuſtenance that is proper to it, they ſtarve and periſh.

On this conſtitution of things, and what is neceſſarily connected with it, depends the variety, the harmony, and order of the univerſe; and it needs no profound learning, or philoſophical ſkill, to make it out. Theſe truths ſtand not upon abſtruſe metaphyſical reaſonings, but on plain obvious facts, which fall under every one's obſervation. Thus, in the ſeveral kinds of terreſtrial animals, birds, and fiſhes, every one can ſee, that each has what we call its proper element,

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out of which it cannot live; its different kind of food and ſuſtenance; ſo different, that what is life to one is death to another. They all have their different powers, or what we call inſtincts; and what is perfectly eaſy for one is utterly impoſſible to another. We might carry the ſame obſervation to the ſeveral claſſes and ranks of the ſame ſpecies; man particularly, being determined by no general inſtinct, affords an infinite variety of characters. All this is very juſtly imputed to what we call their different natures or conſtitutions; by which we mean, that they are ſo made; and thus we are led up to him that made them thus, and appointed them their ſeveral conſtitutions.

It is indeed but a ſhort way our obſervation can reach; no further than a preſent world; and no further even there than things are groſs enough to fall under ſome of our ſenſes. But the reaſon theſe ſenſible obſervations land us in, extends as far as the creation does; that is, as far as there are any creatures endued with life, or vital active powers. So far as theſe are different one from another, there are different conſtitutions: and theſe neceſſarily

lead

lead to different ways of ſubſiſting and acting.

There is a very remarkable divine conſtitution concerning man, and the manner of his ſubſiſtence, referred to by our Saviour, Matth. iv. 4. "That man ſhall "not live by bread alone, but by every "word that proceedeth out of the mouth "of God." In Deuteronomy, viii. 3. the conſtitution ſtands thus, "by every outgo-"ing from the mouth of Jehovah:" A matter of ſuch moment, that we find it given as the reaſon of a forty years continued miracle; feeding the Iſraelites with manna in the wilderneſs, that they might know this truth; and know it ſo as to be thoroughly confirmed in it by their own experience.

But what occaſion, may one ſay, for ſuch a profuſion of miracles in ſo plain a caſe? for though bread is the ordinary ſupport of man's life; yet who is there ſo ignorant as not to know, that the almighty creator can ſubſiſt his creatures without it, and indeed with whatever he pleaſes to appoint for that purpoſe, as well as manna? This is eaſily ſaid, but not ſo eaſily believed; much leſs depended on when

one is reduced to want bread. But however that is, there was evidently a much higher intention in giving the manna, and likewiſe the water from the rock, than merely to bring men to live in a dutiful dependence on God for the ſubſiſtence of a preſent life. It leads us naturally to think of another way of living, and of courſe another way of ſubſiſting in life, than that which the children of Adam have naturally by ordinary food. It was, as almoſt every thing about that people was, a figure, an image, or ſenſible repreſentation, of that life, and way of living, which God had ſet up from the beginning of the world in the ſeed of the woman; and which, beſides all the particular revelations of it, he renewed to Abraham, the father of that people, for him and his ſeed. This intention of the manna, the bread from heaven, our Lord opens at large, John vi.; and thence the Apoſtle, 1 Cor. x. 3. 4. calls it the *ſpiritual meat*, and the waters from the rock the *ſpiritual drink*; referring directly to Chriſt, the great ordinance of God, for the ſupport and maintenance of the ſpiritual and eternal life.

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This general point ſtands ſo ſtrongly ſupported by all the views we have given us of Chriſt either in the Old Teſtament or in the New, and the many ſtrong expreſſions there made uſe of, (ſuch as, "our "living by him;" his being "the reſurrec- "tion and the life;" not only as the author of life to his people, but as their life itſelf), that it is not queſtioned by any who ſo much as pretend to be Chriſtians, that he is certainly "the author of eternal ſalva- "tion to all them that obey him." But as the ſubject is ſo noble in itſelf, and ſuch as we are all nearly intereſted in; it ill becomes us to paſs it over with a general or ſuperficial view, when we are furniſhed ſo plentifully with materials to lead us further: nor can we ever ſatisfy ourſelves, until we ſee how fitly theſe expreſſions are uſed, and particularly this which we have before us, that it is not ſo properly *the man who lives*, as it is *Chriſt that liveth* in him.

Here we have three diſtinct propoſitions, which muſt all be kept in view, in order to make out the full meaning of the Apoſtle's words:

1. That Chriſt lives.

2. That this living Chriſt is in the Chriſtian.——And,

3. That he lives in the Chriſtian in ſuch a manner, that it is not ſo properly the Chriſtian that lives, as Chriſt that liveth in him.

Our Lord explains the whole in its order and connection, in terms very ſimilar to thoſe of the Apoſtle, John vi. 57. "As "the living Father hath ſent me, and I "live by the Father; ſo he that eateth "me, even he ſhall live by me."—— Which words plainly import,

That Chriſt, ſent as he is by the Father, lives by him.

That Chriſt is united to the Chriſtian, as food is to the body.——And,

That the Chriſtian lives by Chriſt thus in him, as He does by the Father.

This carries ſomething in it incomprehenſibly high; ſuch an union with God, the fountain of life, by the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, that it is by his ſtanding between God and them, cloſely and indiſſolubly united to God on one ſide, and to them on the other, that the life of God is conveyed to, and maintained in them, not barely in that low way which ſome call

call *the life of God in the ſoul of man*, a ſort of conformity unto what they ſtyle *the moral perfections of the divine nature*, but by a real conveyance of theſe perfections and powers in their proper meaſure, in which that divine temper is founded.——It may be worth while to conſider the matter ſomewhat more particularly. And,

I. CHRIST lives, and lives by the Father. There the foundation and groundwork of the Chriſtian life is laid, juſt as the foundation of the natural life was laid in Adam; all that was neceſſary for the deſigned propagation of either, was laid ready in their reſpective heads. Both were the pattern, the ſtandard upon which all ſucceeding generations were to be formed; and by the proviſion made in them, ſecurity was taken for the conveyance of life reſpectively to all that ever ſhould ſhare in either, or were deſigned in the eternal counſels to do ſo. And could we diſtinctly and fully ſurvey the life that lies in the head, and the proviſion there made, we might ſee all that was to follow: but this is a ſort of knowledge not made for man; and it is plain madneſs to attempt it, much

much more to build concluſions upon it, any further than God has been pleaſed to manifeſt and reveal it to us. But ſo far as he has, we ſhould be both very ungrateful to him, and injurious to ourſelves, if we did not make it our buſineſs to improve it to the beſt advantage: and as our Lord holds it forth to us as the pattern upon which the Chriſtian life is formed, and at the ſame time as the beſt aſſurance we can have of the truth and certainty of it, we ſhall be much to blame, if, through our negligence, we fall ſhort of the intention of this kind intimation.

There is, without all doubt, a myſtery in the perſonal life of Jeſus Chriſt, as there is in his union with the Father; ſuch as it is impoſſible for human apprehenſion to penetrate, any more than to "find out the "Almighty to perfection." When we ſpeak of the life of Jeſus, we ſpeak of a man aſſumed into, not only the neareſt relation to, but likewiſe the moſt intimate union and connection with the eternal God. It is by much too low to conceive of him as a man who hath God dwelling or abiding in him; though even that carries ſomething in it inconceivably high; as, on the other

other hand, it is abſurd and contradictory to imagine God and man to be ſo mixed together in his perſon, and transformed mutually into one another, that there ſhould remain no diſtinction. But yet the man has no ſeparate being or ſubſiſtence, but in union with the Deity; and therefore no ſeparate life, or any powers and actings of it. When he was in the world, and nothing but the man appeared to vulgar eyes, yet he ſaid poſitively, "that he and "the Father were one;" "that he did no-"thing of himſelf;" nay, "that he did "whatever the Father did:" and even when he ſeemed to be forſaken, and in certain caſes, particularly in his temptations in the wilderneſs, and his ſufferings upon the croſs, was in ſome ſenſe really forſaken, and left to himſelf; yet was not the union then diſſolved; he ſtill lived by the Father, even when he laid down the periſhing life he took up from Adam; and, we may ſay, he never lived ſo properly as when he was parting, and eſpecially after he had parted with it. And thence it is we find, that the Chriſtian's conformity to Chriſt is not ſtated upon what He was in this world, but upon his death, and reſurrection

ſurrection from the dead; Phil. iii. 10.; Col. iii. 3. 4.; Rom. vi. 5. *et ſeqq.*; 1 John iii. 2.; and every where we find that ſubject ſet before us in this light.

Thus, then, the caſe ſtands: In God is the fountain of life; and it is his diſtinguiſhing property to have life in himſelf, which can be communicated to no mere creature. But he can communicate life, as he does being, out of the all-ſufficiency of his own fulneſs; that is, vital powers and activity, in ſuch various and different degrees as he ſees fit; by ſending forth his Spirit, who worketh in every one according as he willeth. Thus we find the divine power exerted and put forth on every occaſion; which we will not ſtand particularly to inſtance. And the nearer any creature is brought to God, the fountain of life, the more nearly doth that creature partake of his Spirit, and conſequently of all the powers of life: and perhaps it will be found, that life, and all the powers of it, are more properly the agency of the divine Spirit than of the man himſelf. But this muſt not be extended to *dead works*, as we find them called by him who gives nothing a wrong name: theſe proceed from the want

of

of life. But ſuch as are the proper exerciſes and native productions of life, from Bezaleel and Aholiab's manual ſkill, to the Apoſtle Paul's heroick courage and reſolution, we find always attributed to the Spirit of God, "in whom we live, and "move, and have our being," in a much higher ſenſe than can be well apprehended in our preſent ſtate of darkneſs and ignorance.

As the nearneſs then, or rather the oneneſs ſubſiſting in the perſon of Jeſus, of the man with the Deity, is altogether of a ſingular nature, ſo muſt his life likewiſe be; ſo ſingular, that in the whole creation of God we have good reaſon to believe it has nothing parallel to it. He lives by the Father in ſuch a way as is peculiar unto that ſituation; not only directly and immediately, as no other man can, but in ſuch a meaſure and degree as is incompatible to a mere creature. Thus we find himſelf aſſerting, John v. 26. "As the "Father hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he "likewiſe given to the Son to have life in "himſelf;" and "as the Father raiſeth the "dead, and quickeneth whom he will, ſo "alſo doth the Son." There is at once the

poſſeſſion and exerciſe of the divine life, with all the powers belonging to it, and both in ſuch an appropriated manner, in himſelf, as leaves no characteriſtic to diſtinguiſh the life of the Father from that of the Son, except that it is given him of the Father, and he lives by him. And here it muſt be remembered, that it is the man Jeſus who ſpeaks; that we may not be induced to confine this ſo high a privilege to the divine nature in his perſon; nor, which is worſe, degrade the Deity in him to an inferior and dependent ſtation. In a ſuitableneſs unto this, we find it declared, "that in him dwells all the fulneſs "of the Godhead bodily;" inſomuch that the Spirit is not given unto him by meaſure; and the Father, in his love, has given all things into his hand, John iii. 34. 35.; inſomuch that we find this ſame Spirit ſo perfectly in him, and ſo much at his diſpoſal, that he takes a deſignation from the Son as well as from the Father; and is ſent by him, with all his gifts and graces, where he pleaſes. Thus he promiſed to his diſciples; and he performed his promiſe on the day of Pentecoſt, in ſuch a ſenſible manner, as left no room

room to doubt, " that the ſame Jeſus who " was crucified, was made both Lord and " Chriſt." Thus, then, the Son of God lives the very life of the Father. But,

II. THIS living Chriſt *is in* the Chriſtian; that is, abides and dwells in him. This is a point the Spirit of God has very much laboured to impreſs the hearts of men with; and it is a point of infinite moment to them. " Search your own ſelves," ſays the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.: " know " ye not your own ſelves, that Jeſus " Chriſt is in you, unleſs ye be repro- " bates?" Our Lord began to inculcate it in the days of his fleſh, and inſtructed his apoſtles and diſciples to inſiſt upon it as the only thing that could make one a Chriſtian. They did ſo; and have made *a man in Chriſt* the deſcription of ſuch an one. And he and they have left nothing out that could contribute any thing to lead us into proper apprehenſions of the nearneſs and intimacy of that union which is expreſſed by it: from the relation and union which ſubſiſts between Adam and his ſeed, between the vine or olive and the branches, between huſband and wife,

the head and the members, the food and the body; and when theſe will not anſwer, it is carried infinitely above all, to that union which ſubſiſts between the Father and the Son; which makes thoſe who are joined to him not only one body, in whatever ſenſe that is taken, but one ſpirit; and that carries it greatly higher than it is poſſible in our preſent ſtate to apprehend. Thus the apoſtles knew what they ſaid, when they told the men in Chriſt, that their "life was hid," and "that it doth not yet appear what they "ſhall be."

This account of the union between Chriſt and Chriſtians is near of kin to that which he gives of himſelf, and which the Apoſtle took up from him, viz. That he is their life: "I am the reſurrection, and "the life," John xi. 25." and "when "Chriſt who is our life ſhall appear," Col. iii. 4. That oneneſs with the Father, and fulneſs of Spirit and life to which the man Jeſus was exalted, promiſeth much to thoſe who ſtand related to him, as partakers with him in the ſame human nature. It gives the proſpect of another ſort of a head than they had in Adam,

and

and another ſort of life than either that which he conveyed to them, or that which he forfeited. And as he was at the ſame time the pattern of human perfection, whoſe image all his are to bear, it lays a ſure foundation for the moſt exalted hope; as in him we ſee how near a man may be brought to God, eſpecially when we know, as we have it at large declared to us, that the only deſign of placing him in that ſtation, and enduing him in ſo ample a manner, was to ſet up a proper medium, or mean, by whom an union, and anſwerable communion, between God and mankind, might be eſtabliſhed, and maintained inviolably, without any danger either of interruption or diſſolution.

It was in this view we conſidered him above, as the great Mediator between God and man, performing the terms of eternal life for them, and in their name receiving all the fulneſs of it, to be communicated and conveyed to them in the proper time and way. As then the living Father ſent him, and he lives by the Father, in that perfect oneneſs with him, and communion with him, in the ſame Spirit and life; ſo it is neceſſary that he

unite

unite himſelf to them, in order to make them ſharers in the ſame Spirit and life which dwelleth in him without meaſure; that is, as himſelf deſcribes it, the Father in him, and he in them; and again, they in him, and he in the Father, John xvii. And thus they come to be, through him, united to God, the great fountain of life, and to live upon God by him.

There is ſome variety in the expreſſions made uſe of by the Spirit of God to expreſs this communication of the ſpiritual and eternal life, which is the immediate conſequence of the Chriſtian's union with Chriſt. Sometimes they are ſaid to live through him, ſometimes by him; ſometimes again, to live upon him, as their proper nouriſhment and ſupport, and very often as their life itſelf; and ſometimes again, as Chriſt is ſaid to be in them, ſo alſo to live in them, as the Apoſtle here deſcribes the life which he lived.—— And this is the

III. THIRD thing we took notice of in the deſcription: This living Chriſt not only is, or abides, in all real Chriſtians, but alſo *lives* in them; which has been very differently

differently underſtood, according to the different apprehenſions men have had of their union with him, which is indeed the ground and foundation of this. And as there have been, and ſtill are, a multitude of men, who will needs be called Chriſtians, who yet ſeem deſirous to be as little obliged to Chriſt, and to have as little dependence on him, as poſſible, both the one and the other have been in effect explained away. I will not ſtand to follow groundleſs imaginations; but gather up, as near as I can, the mind of Chriſt himſelf, as he has revealed it unto us, in the record he has given us by his Spirit; and which will be found agreeable to the experience and inward ſenſe of all ſuch as are Chriſtians indeed, and may approve itſelf to the conſciences of all ſuch as are willing to ſubmit themſelves to God. And here,

1. It is to be adverted to, that the man, the child of Adam, cannot live of himſelf; and therefore it cannot properly be ſaid, that *he* lives at all. Something of this is true of every creature, who, having no more but a borrowed being, cannot live but by borrowed ſupport. But whatever

ever is owing to God and his Spirit in other caſes, there are peculiar circumſtances in the Chriſtian life that make it impoſſible for him either to attain or live the Chriſtian life. We had occaſion to obſerve, in the foregoing diſſertation, how all the children of Adam are, by the judgement given upon their firſt father, bound under death; really, and to all intents and purpoſes, dead to God, and the ſpiritual world, and conſequently to all the actings and exerciſes of the ſpiritual life; "without God," either the knowledge of him, or any intereſt in him; real Atheiſts, and "without hope in the "world," until they are inſtructed and taught by the Spirit of Chriſt, revealing eternal and unſeen things, as they lie in the divine record. And as for our bodies, no body makes any doubt, that they will return to the duſt whence they were taken. And when the Chriſtian comes to be crucified with Chriſt, he makes a renunciation only of what was not worth keeping, and indeed of what it was impoſſible for him to hold. What further views and hopes he has, are all of them ſo founded in Chriſt, and ſo entirely owing to him,

him, that there cannot be a greater truth uttered, than that "without him we can "do nothing;" and therefore nothing more juſt than to acknowledge it, and give him the glory, and nothing more baſe than to aſſume any thing to ourſelves.

And yet there is not one among all the truths of God the haughty ſpirit of the child of Adam is more loath to ſubmit to. Men have ſome how or other got their heads full of the dignity of the human nature, and the great things they are capable of; great things indeed in Chriſt, where the true dignity of the human nature lies; but as they are ſtrangers to this, their overbearing confidence in themſelves can have no other foundation than what it commonly has in other caſes, ignorance and miſtake. Their firſt father, whoſe image they bear, would needs be wiſer than ever God deſigned him; and his poſterity bear the marks of his infatuation, diſdaining to be taught of God, nay diſdaining heaven itſelf, unleſs they can earn it by their own atchievements. No wonder if they are left to reap the fruit of their own doings, the only thing that will convince them of their nothingneſs

and folly at once. The truth is ſo palpable, that any one may feel it who can feel at all; and nothing can be a ſtronger evidence that they are dead when they do not. But the "fool is wiſer in his own "conceit, than ſeven men that can ren-"der a reaſon." And ſurely poor is the proſpect of thoſe who cannot live but in direct oppoſition to a divine conſtitution. For,

2. It is by Chriſt alone that any of the children of Adam can be delivered from the power of death. Vain men have amuſed themſelves and the world with empty notions of a natural immortality of the ſoul, and an after ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. "Life and immortality are "indeed brought to light in the goſpel," and were publiſhed to a periſhing world from the very beginning of it. Thence they muſt have taken the hint of it: for ſurely nature can ſay nothing of God's intentions and deſigns, how long or how ſhort a time he has aſſigned for their duration, and what purpoſes he has deſigned them for. The children of Adam are evidently made for a preſent world, to live upon the creature, and are by no means furniſhed

furniſhed for any other. And what is this boaſted immortality? The body is laid in the duſt, and nature knows nothing of a reſurrection. If the ſoul ſhould continue to live, it is not the man; it muſt be transformed into another ſort of being; and, alas! how ill provided are the beſt of the kind for the ſpiritual world, which they have not, and indeed cannot have, any conſiſtent notion of.

The ſcriptures of truth allow of no ſuch fanciful imaginations. Life and immortality ſtand there ſtrongly and inſeparably connected with the reſurrection of the body, exemplified and ſtrongly inſtructed by the reſurrection of Chriſt, a moſt proper mean of begetting us again unto a *lively hope*, as the Apoſtle emphatically expreſſes the true Chriſtian's proſpect of eternity. And though it be true, that the ſoul muſt ſubſiſt ſeparately until the end of the world, there is proper proviſion made for it in that new creation in Chriſt Jeſus, whereby Chriſtians are begotten and born again, of the incorruptible ſeed, by the power and efficacy of the Spirit of the living God, and are entered upon a new life, and brought into the ſpiritual and e-

ternal world, with the proper proviſion of powers and abilities becoming the new creature, and ſuitable to the ſtation, the buſineſs, and enjoyments, of that life they are entered upon.

But all this is in Chriſt Jeſus, and in him only: "For there is no other name given "under heaven whereby we muſt be ſa-"ved." This ſtands an inviolable conſtitution of heaven: hence Chriſt bears the name of a Saviour; and he had the name given him by one, and the only one who had authority to give it. And to ſet up any other perſon or thing, is to affront him in the moſt open manner, and at the ſame time the authority that appointed him. It is rebelling againſt the God of heaven in a more notorious manner than ever our firſt father did; and therefore muſt, as it certainly will, have a more dreadful iſſue.

But Chriſt is at the ſame time the *only* perſon who is able to ſave. Put the caſe, there was a free pardon proclaimed unto the children of Adam, (and that in effect is the caſe); what would be the effect of it? Salvation, that is, deliverance from the curſe of the law, looſing the bands by which

which ſin held miſerable mortals under death, is a great matter indeed; and it is the only foundation on which there is, or can be, a poſſibility of entering into life. But can they raiſe themſelves from the dead? Can they approach the fountain of life, an unknown God, and thence provide themſelves with the neceſſary powers of life? Can they break off the long confirmed habits and cuſtoms they have contracted in following the courſe of this world? Can they, all of a ſudden, or indeed with all the powers and perſeverance they can command, enter a courſe directly oppoſite to that which their hearts, their ſentiments, their whole ſoul, has been formed on ſince they came into the world; which their whole frame and conſtitution naturally leads them to; and all theſe ſeconded and ſupported by an inviſible power, "the "ſpirit that worketh in the children of "diſobedience;" whoſe motions we cannot perceive, and whoſe power and cunning we are by no means match for, tho' we are aſſured, "he goes about like a "roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may "devour?" Theſe are but hints of the difficulties and oppoſition we muſt lay our account

account with; but ſuch as muſt fill the ſtouteſt heart with deſpair, not to be removed but by the proſpect of ſuch a Saviour as the goſpel gives us in Jeſus Chriſt. We would be much in the ſame caſe as David was with Saul, one day or other we muſt fall by this or the other enemy, and, like him, as multitudes do, take ſanctuary in the land of the Philiſtines. But,

3. In Chriſt Jeſus is lodged, for the children of men, all the fulneſs of proviſion neceſſary for recovering and raiſing up the dead ſons of Adam unto eternal life. We need no more to aſſure us of this, than to conſider his reſurrection, and the glory that followed; the life he then entered upon; the power lodged in his hand, all power in heaven and earth; and the authority, the abſolute authority, he is inveſted with over all principalities and powers, both in this world and the world to come, viſible and inviſible; the keys of hell and of death committed unto him; with perfect power to raiſe the dead, to give eternal life to whom he will, and to determine the everlaſting condition of mankind. Whoſoever believes theſe things, muſt own, "that he is able

"to

" to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come " unto God through him." But generals, however ſtrong, make but a faint impreſſion; and if we propoſe to make the proper advantages, this fulneſs of power we find lodged in him muſt be more particularly conſidered.

And in order thereto we muſt begin where the apparent neceſſities of mankind do; that total darkneſs, or ignorance of God, and the world of ſpirits, which men are born with, and which continues in multitudes after all the pains that have been taken with them. Something of the knowledge of God has indeed been in the world ever ſince there were men in it, and thence a handle has been taken to perſuade the world it was natural: and numbers have even imagined, they could demonſtrate the thing; with what ſucceſs, the experience of all ages has ſhown. The Apoſtle declares it in a word, " The world " by wiſdom knew not God;" the knowledge of God was loſt in the hands of the greateſt geniuſes that ever appeared among men; and had not the only begotten, who is in the boſom of the Father, declared the inviſible God, they would have been

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in the ſame caſe ſtill. And when the matter is duly conſidered, it will appear, that "no man knoweth the Father but the "Son, and he to whom the Son will re-"veal him," Luke x. 22.

He has done it accordingly, not by metaphyſical reaſonings, and quirks of philoſophy, which few are able to apprehend, and can reach no further than the heads of thoſe who do; but in a manner perfectly ſuited to the conſtitution and preſent ſtate of mankind; opening his eternal counſels, and inſtructing his power and Godhead by the works which he has done; preſenting a living image of him in himſelf, and leading forward our apprehenſions to ſpiritual and unſeen things, by ſenſible repreſentations, either natural, or inſtituted for the purpoſe. Thus our firſt parents were taught in paradiſe. Thus they after their expulſion, and the ſucceeding patriarchs, were taught, down to Moſes, who was employed to lay together, in one ſyſtem, all the inſtitutions and ordinances which were neceſſary to make out a perfect figure, reſemblance, and ſenſible repreſentation of God's ways with men, and the manner in which they were

to

to deal with him. The whole buſineſs of the Spirit of Chriſt ſpeaking in the prophets, was to keep theſe uncorrupted, to explain and inculcate the true intention of them, and to reclaim the people from their abuſes and errors, until himſelf came, and took off the vail from the face of Moſes, and ſhowed the glory of God ſhining forth, and manifeſting itſelf, in his perſon and miniſtry, the end of all theſe ordinances, which are now aboliſhed.

But this is not the only excellency of his manner of teaching; he can do what never another could; he can not only ſpeak to the ear, but can give capacity to apprehend and underſtand; he teaches not only the mind and underſtanding, but the heart and ſoul; and not only conveys notions and conceptions, but that very Spirit and wiſdom which he himſelf poſſeſſes; by this means forming every diſciple of his into the ſame views, ſentiments, and conduct, to make out a perfect reſemblance of their great inſtructor.

But in the courſe of this inſtruction men come to diſcover that they are ſinners, and thereby expoſed to proper puniſhment from the hand of their creator,

the great ſovereign of heaven and earth. And the more they know of him, the more vile and baſe does ſin appear, and the more vile and baſe do they find themſelves; two points which have perplexed the world from the earlieſt accounts we have of men; and which accordingly gave riſe to that variety of ſacrifices, luſtrations, purifications, and waſhings, which have been always the object of their greateſt attention. Human wiſdom could diſcover the vanity of theſe methods of placating the Deity, and purifying from the defilement of ſin; but could never deviſe any thing which could purge the conſcience, or make men eaſy; for this plain good reaſon, That they had no aſſurance of being accepted of God. The ſacrifice and interceſſion of the great high-prieſt was the only method which had the divine approbation; and having that ſo fully manifeſted in the ſacred record, a foundation is thereby laid upon which the weary ſoul can reſt.

But in the ſame courſe of inſtruction it is diſcovered, that ſin is the death of the ſoul, as, in its very nature, it ſeparates from God; becauſe, in its very nature, it

it is a forſaking and departing from him; and the ſoul feels itſelf dead, and utterly incapable, with all its boaſted powers, to recover itſelf, or rather riſe up to the life of God. The children of Adam under the diſpenſation of the goſpel of grace, can hear the report of another world, another life, and another way of living. They feel they want it; but how to come at it, they can never diſcover, becauſe they are ſtrangers to the Spirit of Chriſt, and the aſtoniſhing effects of his uniting with the ſouls of men. This the divine teacher diſcovers as lodged in his hand, and with him all the ſupplies of ſpiritual life, and the powers belonging to it; which he is intruſted to diſpenſe and give forth at his pleaſure, as the ſeveral occaſions and neceſſities of his people require. And hence,

4. The Lord Jeſus is the only way in and by which ſpiritual and eternal life, with all the perfections and powers belonging to it, can be conveyed from the great fountain of life, the all-ſufficiency and fulneſs of the great creator, to Adam's periſhing children. This was repreſented very fairly in the natural father, the firſt man, the figure of him who was to come;

and there evidence was given, that mankind was one of thoſe ſpecies of creatures which do not receive their life and being directly and immediately from their maker's hands. In the firſt father the life of all his children ſubſiſted, to be conveyed down from generation to generation to the end of the world, by ſuch an unalterable conſtitution, that it is naturally impoſſible to bring one ſingle man into the world in any other manner; and thus Adam may be ſaid, in a certain ſenſe, to live in all his poſterity.

This is a fair illuſtration of that important truth before us, that the Chriſtian life, all that fulneſs of ſpiritual powers and activity, which ever did, or ever will, appear among men, was originally lodged in the hands of their great Redeemer, "the "ſecond man, who is the Lord from hea-"ven;" and from whom it is derived down to the ſeveral generations of Chriſtians from the beginning to the end of the world, in the courſe of regeneration, and the new birth; which makes it equally impoſſible to enter into the ſpiritual and eternal world, and to live that life, by any other means.

But

But it is greatly more than a bare illuſtration; it is one of the ſtrongeſt proofs that can be of the truth and certainty of the thing. This it would be, if there were no more in it than that the firſt Adam was by divine deſignation and appointment the figure of Jeſus Chriſt, who was to come: and that he was ſo, the Apoſtle not only expreſsly ſays, Rom. v. 12. *et ſeqq.*; but opens and explains at large the particulars in which he was ſo. There, and eſpecially 1 Cor. xv. 45.—50. he inſiſts at large on this very view of him; and ſhews how the ſeveral deſcendents of both are like their root and original, and bear their image, and accordingly live as they did.

But this is not all: the figure leads us to yet a fuller evidence; as both the one and the other are in this manner ſet at the head of mankind by a divine conſtitution, which all the created powers in the univerſe cannot ſet aſide. I need not repeat what has been oftener than once obſerved already, and carries its own evidence along with it, that the divine conſtitution is what makes the nature of things; that is, every thing to be what it is; and

founds

founds all thoſe relations on which what our faſhionable writers call eternal truths have all their dependence. And if any ſhould aſk, how the activity and powers belonging to the inhabitants of the ſpiritual and eternal world, can only be communicated by Jeſus Chriſt? we need but aſk them again, whence it is that man's preſent life, and the powers attending it, cannot be conveyed but from Adam? The reaſon both of the one and the other is, that God hath ſo ordained and appointed; and it is unnatural boldneſs to aſk, how he came to do ſo?

And yet he has condeſcended to anſwer the important queſtion, and has given us a variety of reaſons for his ſo doing. I ſhall mention only two of them; 1*ſt*, To reduce man to proper acknowledgements, that he lives only by the grace of his creator; and, 2*dly*, To make life ſure to him, that it ſhall never be either forfeited or taken away from him.

To live by the grace, that is, the free gift and bounty of the creator, is evidently the only way of living that can become a creature; nay, we may ſay, that a creature is capable of. It is the only way of living

living that can give the creator the glory and honour that belongs to him, and the only way that can maintain in the creature's heart ſuch a ſenſe of his favour and aſtoniſhing goodneſs, as can make it perfectly happy in the exerciſes of pure unalloyed love. This notwithſtanding was a leſſon our firſt father very ſoon forgot; and nothing would ſatisfy him but independent liberty. In the event of this his attempt we have a ſtanding ſenſible document of its native conſequence and tendency, miſery and death. In Chriſt, and the way of living mankind are bound to in him, there is no room left for any ſuch dangerous imagination. The lodging life, with all the furniture of it, in his hand, the beſtowing, the preſerving, the perfecting of it, affords the moſt ſubſtantial and affecting evidence that all is of grace; ſo that the man who ſees and believes the truth as it is in Jeſus, has nothing left him but eternal acknowledgements and love to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus, for the grace that is brought to us in him. This is the moſt perfect happineſs and unalloyed enjoyment a creature can be capable of here or hereafter.

In

In the inſtructive caſe of our firſt father, we have likewiſe the moſt palpable evidence, how unfit the moſt perfect man is to have his life and happineſs lodged in his own hand. A fitter than he was certainly never found among his poſterity, that "Son of man" only excepted, whom our gracious God has pitched on, and fitted up for this purpoſe. This is the reaſon the Apoſtle gives why the inheritance muſt be of grace, Rom. iv. 16. "That "the promiſe might be ſure to all the "ſeed." And as it could never be ſo in the hand of man, it is lodged in his who has perfectly fulfilled the terms of life, and therefore cannot miſcarry by forfeiture; and at the ſame time is perfectly proof againſt open force; ſo that nothing can mar the effectual conveyance of it, and carrying it on to the higheſt pitch of perfection, "the meaſure of the ſtature of "the fulneſs of Chriſt."

We might add to all this another conſideration, viz. That the mediation of Chriſt is the only way, as matters ſtand between God and mankind, by which any of the children of Adam can ſtand before God, or have any dealings at all with him.

Much

Much has been written to ſhow, that God could not, in a conſiſtency with the honour that is due unto the ſovereign of the univerſe, nor indeed with his own perfections, and particularly his holineſs, which is the reſult of all, have any thing to do with ſuch a creature as man, unleſs it was to treat him in ſuch a manner as a rebellious creature deſerves. And indeed, if we underſtand ourſelves, this is the light in which a conſcience duly affected with the evil of ſin will ſet the matter. But the Spirit of God moſt ordinarily puts it on another footing, viz. the incapacity of man to have any immediate dealings with God. As his glory muſt overwhelm us, unleſs it be qualified as it is in Chriſt Jeſus, the medium by which it is preſented to us; ſo an evil conſcience at the ſame time, that is, the conſciouſneſs of what we really are, breaks our confidence in God, and fills us with diffidence, jealouſies, and fears; which naturally produce in creatures of our make coldneſs, averſion, and even direct enmity, againſt what he really is; which no where ſhows itſelf with greater ſtrength than in the pains which we ſee taken by men to form God

into ſuch a mould as ſuits their own circumſtances. Theſe can only be removed by the mediation of Chriſt, and the place he holds between God and man. There it is, and there only, that men recover confidence in God, the ſole foundation on which the love of God, and all true religion, of which it is the ſpirit and ſubſtance, ſtands. Through him they are called to come, and through him they can come, with boldneſs, unto a throne of grace, enter the *Holy of Holineſs*, and ſtand with pleaſure and joy before their heavenly Father. Whatever others do, they who know how hard a thing it is, even with all the advantages we have by Jeſus, for a guilty ſinner ever to hope for any thing from God's hand, will feel how abſolutely impoſſible it muſt have been without it.

It is in this view that our Lord ſets himſelf forth to our obſervation, particularly John vi. not only as the giver of life, and the giver of the bread or meat which endures unto eternal life, but as that very bread which came down from heaven, the proper ſuſtenance of the ſpiritual and eternal life, and ſent into the world by the Father for that very purpoſe.

It

It is in conſequence of this that we find the diſciples acknowledging, " that he had the " words of eternal life;" thoſe words which proceed out of the mouth of God, by which men live, viz. the mighty power of God, by which life is ſupported as effectually, and in as proper a manner, as the natural life is ſupported by natural food. And hence,

5. We have the Lord Jeſus ſet before us, as uniting himſelf with men, and thereby communicating his Spirit and life to them; and thus making effectual the purpoſe of having the fulneſs of God lodged in him for their behoof. We obſerved before, how they who are joined to him are one ſpirit; " and if any man have not his " Spirit, he is none of his." The truth and reality of this, as alſo the effects produced by it, we have ſenſible evidence of in the caſe of the apoſtles on the day of Pentecoſt. That was the fulfilment of a particular promiſe made to them; and a ſeal or confirmation of the general promiſe made to all Chriſtians. By it we ſee what the Spirit of Chriſt can do; things ſo impoſſible in nature, that nothing but the event could have rendered them credible;

and which leaves us no room to doubt of the promiſed ordinary effects of the Spirit of Chriſt given to ordinary Chriſtians.

And why ſhould we doubt, or what colour can there be of making any queſtion about the power of God, for anſwering any purpoſe it is applied to? The Spirit of Chriſt is that very divine power which gave life and being to every creature in the firſt creation; that very power which endued men with all the extraordinary gifts and qualifications that ever were found among them; and therefore muſt be the proper agent in the new creation, and the author of all the powers which are neceſſary for the buſineſs and enjoyments there. It is true his way of operating is ſecret, and hid from ſenſible obſervation; but ſuch are all the operations of ſpirits, even of God himſelf; and not perceivable but by the effects: and when theſe are terminated upon the ſpirits of men, they can be perceived only by them; and no other man can ſay, whether they are real or imaginary, until it be determined by ſenſible facts, the effect thereof in their lives and converſations.

Such is the nature of the ſpiritual life: it

it is all hidden and ſecret, wrought by one inviſible agent upon another, the Spirit of God upon the ſoul of man. But why ſhould the men of the world account it mere enthuſiaſtic deluſion, becauſe they feel it not themſelves, and can conceive of no way of God's communicating life, or perfections of any kind, to man, but that imperfect external one of reaſoning and motive? Thoſe who believe there ever was ſuch a thing as creation, can entertain no doubt of the poſſibility of inſpiration, which is but exerting the ſame kind of power, giving being to ſomething which was not before. Thoſe who doubt of it, will yet acknowledge, that he who made the ſoul at firſt, can eaſily add new perfections and powers; can bring in new light to the underſtanding; enlarge the apprehenſive capacity; form the ſentiments, and eſtabliſh the heart and affections upon them. And what is that but a more particular account of the meaning of that word, which properly expreſſes the influence the Spirit of God has upon the ſpirit of man, when he unites himſelf to it for any particular purpoſes, particularly thoſe of the ſpiritual life?

And

And can it be thought impoſſible that God ſhould thus unite himſelf with man, after what is actually done, and demonſtrated in the ſtrongeſt manner, in the perſon of Jeſus? How could he be aſſumed into that perfect oneneſs with the Father? and was it not for this very purpoſe that he was aſſumed, and had the Spirit given to dwell in him in all his fulneſs, to aſſure men, that God would indeed by his means dwell with them, and give his Spirit into theirs, to form them up into a temple, an habitation for God, by his means? He who raiſed the man Jeſus ſo much above man, even while he was numbered among the ſons of Adam, and much more ſo when he was raiſed from the dead, and put in poſſeſſion of a life infinitely above it, can with the ſame eaſe take any of the children of Adam he pleaſeth into what meaſures of conformity to him he ſees proper. That Spirit which made apoſtles of fiſhermen, which took the fooliſh and weak things of the world, and by them confounded and brought to nought all the power and wiſdom that were in it, can eaſily accompliſh the new

creature,

creature, and furniſh him out with all that is neceſſary for living to God.

And when it is further conſidered, that this ſame Spirit which is given, and thus unites himſelf to their ſpirits, is the Spirit of Jeſus, the Spirit that dwells in him, and the very principle of his life by which he lives, and poſſeſſes all that power and activity in heaven and in earth; how can we conceive of it otherwiſe, than as Chriſt uniting himſelf to them in the neareſt and moſt intimate manner, and ſharing his life with them, and making them partakers of it, with all the powers and perfections which belong to it? And thus he is very properly their life, their ſtrength, their all; and thus one may very juſtly ſay with the Apoſtle, it is not they that live, but Chriſt that lives in them. For,

1. By him they are quickened, and made alive, when they had no life, nor any of the powers of life, in themſelves. By his right they hold, and in him all their hopes and proſpects are founded; and to him belongs the diſpoſal of them. When they look to themſelves, they find nothing but weakneſs and emptineſs; not being ſufficient of themſelves

ſelves ſo much as to think any thing as of themſelves, far leſs to do. And therefore,

2. All the powers of life are entirely in his hand, and under his direction and management. The preſervation and continuance of them, the growth and increaſe, and the completement of them according to their meaſure, are all his doing. It is not in man, no not in the beſt of men, to order their own ways. And tho' they can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening them, yet without him, with all the ſtrength and reſolution they can command, they are altogether unable to ſtand againſt the leaſt temptation that caſts up in their way. According to the meaſure in which his Spirit exerts his powers in the ſoul, ſuch is their meaſure of life, light, holineſs, conſolation, and joy.

3. The exerciſes and actings of the ſpiritual life in every part, are all under his direction for the ſame reaſon. It was by the grace of God that even the Apoſtle Paul was what he was; and when he had laboured more abundantly than all the other apoſtles, he diſclaims the honour of it: "Yet not I," ſaith he, "but the grace of

"God

"God that is with me," 1 Cor. xv. 10.; and no wonder, when he aſcribes his life only to Chriſt living in him. And therefore,

4. All the fruit of the ſpiritual life, all the good that the Chriſtian either does or receives, is owing entirely to Chriſt, and the glory of it belongs entirely to him: "He made us, and not we ourſelves." And we are ſo made, that indeed the true Chriſtian is no more than a ſort of copy, an image, of him, drawn by his own hand; and the Chriſtian life is but the life of Chriſt extended and drawn out into its proper conſequences and effects. It was only the vanity of man that ever made him imagine himſelf any thing; and the ſtrength and glory of the Chriſtian life lies in renouncing all pretenſions to it.

And now, from this general view of the Chriſtian life, we may be enabled to draw out ſomething of its true and diſtinguiſhing nature; by which the innumerable miſtakes about it may be rectified; and men who would be Chriſtians, directed what they are to aim at, and what meaſures they are to take.

And here it muſt be obſerved, that the

Chriſtian life may be conſidered either in its beginnings in this world, while the Chriſtian lives in the fleſh; or in its perfection in the world to come: the one is commonly called the ſtate of *grace*, the other of *glory*. There are innumerable circumſtantial differences; and ſo is there in common life between infancy and manhood. But theſe are not different lives; but different ſtages and degrees of the ſame life, carrying on to its perfection by nutriture and culture; ſuited unto the nature, the frame, and conſtitution, of the creature, under the proviſion made by the great creator for theſe purpoſes, and his bleſſing upon them: and the bleſſing of God is nothing but the interpoſal of his Spirit and power for making theſe means effectual; and none of them can ever riſe higher, in the order of cauſes, than inſtruments in his hand, which he employs at pleaſure. Hereby the whole univerſe is kept in an entire dependence on him; ſo that there can be no evil in the univerſe but what is under his direction: A truth far from being minded ſo generally as it is acknowledged.

When we ſpeak then of the life of Chriſtians,

ſtians, we take in both theſe views of it; from the firſt moment of their regeneration and new birth, that the ſeed of God enters into them, and the Spirit of Chriſt animates and enlivens them, through all the intermediate degrees, to their perfect conformity to their glorious head; when Adam's life and Adam's world ſhall be deſtroyed together. This is a kind of life, even in the loweſt degrees of it, as different from all others, as they are from one another. The only ſort of life that pretends any relation to it, is that which we derive from Adam, or rather that which Adam was poſſeſſed of in his firſt paradiſiacal ſtate; and numbers who will needs be reckoned Chriſtians, think there needs no more to make one a Chriſtian, than to have that integrity and uprightneſs reſtored to them; and that the life of Chriſt may very eaſily, and muſt be ingrafted upon that which we have from him. The vanity of ſuch imaginations we have ſhown in the former part: That the Chriſtian life is as different, even from innocent Adam's, as the ſubſtance is from the ſhadow, the truth of the thing from the figure and outward repreſentation of it;

and that the life derived from him, which men now enjoy, is ſo far from having any reſemblance, that it is entirely inconſiſtent with it, and is of courſe deſtroyed in the ſame degrees that the Chriſtian life grows up to perfection. This is a matter of the greateſt moment, as in effect all the errors and miſtakes which have crept into either the theory or practice of Chriſtianity, owe their being to mens not adverting to the true nature of it. And though I ſhould not incline to repeat what has been already ſaid, it muſt be greatly worth while to have a full and diſtinct view of it in the light in which the Apoſtle here ſets it. And here,

1. It muſt be very carefully obſerved, that this a part of the new creation, diſtinct entirely, and different from the old, in all the conſequences and effects of it. It is ſo particularly to the Chriſtian himſelf; as the deſign of it is, to enter him into the ſpiritual world as it now ſubſiſts in the unchangeable God, who is the very ſubſtance of it, "without either variable-"neſs or ſhadow of turning; from ever-"laſting to everlaſting the ſame." This is notwithſtanding a world entirely new unto

unto the children of Adam, who are as much ſtrangers to it as if it had no being. Something they may have heard about it, as thoſe who live in Chriſtian countries certainly muſt: but where it is at all regarded, it is but like the reports which we hear of remote countries where we never were, and are never like to be; and tho' we ſhould, yet the places and inhabitants would ſtill be new to us, after all we have heard about them. Now if there was no more to diſtinguiſh Chriſtianity from all pretenders and counterfeits, this would do it effectually, that Chriſtians are born into this new world, and thus become new creatures; creatures made for the purpoſe, every way fitted for the ſociety, the buſineſs, the enjoyments, and, in one word, the whole way of living there, to live and enjoy themſelves, as ſpirits ſhould do, in God, and his fulneſs and all-ſufficiency.

But when we ſay the Chriſtians are a part of the new creation, we mean ſomething further, and very different from this, viz. that they are deſigned to be the inhabitants of that new world, "the new hea-"vens and new earth," which we look for, according to his promiſe, when the old,

old, thoſe which now are, ſhall be deſtroyed; "when the heavens ſhall paſs a-"way with a great noiſe, and the ele-"ments ſhall melt with fervent heat, the "earth alſo and the works that are there-"in ſhall be burnt up," 2 Pet. iii. 10. *et ſeqq.* The Apoſtle there, you will obſerve, ſpeaks of a ſort of ſcoffers who ſhould come in the laſt days, and, building on the uninterrupted courſe of nature, ſhould ſcoffingly aſk, "Where is the promiſe of "his coming?" and gives this as the riſe of their folly, that they chuſe to be ignorant of what God had from the beginning of the world ſo ſolemnly and publicly declared, that the very modern Heathens were not ignorant of it, that this earth once deſtroyed by water, was reſerved to a ſecond and final deſtruction by fire; of which the deſtruction of Sodom and the neighbouring cities was a ſort of prelude and example. But whether men will mind it or not, the Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe; the time will certainly come, and when men leaſt look for it.

Poſſibly ſome may ſay, that admitting theſe things to be ſo, this is only a reno-

vation

vation of all things, and no proper creation; from which they will readily infer, that the children of Adam need not be new created, but only renewed in their minds; which they think themſelves greatly countenanced in by this being an apoſtolic phraſe; and that it is generally allowed, that in regeneration there are no new faculties given, and that thoſe we have, need only to be freed from their natural corruption. Theſe things have been ſaid: and it is much to be wiſhed, that when men ſay, or take up the ſayings of others, they underſtood what they ſay. Renovation, if it has any ſenſe at all, is making a thing new which is waxed old, and worn out. In the preſent caſe, it is making a new univerſe after this is deſtroyed. If they pleaſe to ſay, out of the ruins of this, it will not mend the matter. It will require the ſame power that created this, to rear up the new one; and when it is done, it will not be this. The inhabitants muſt be ſuited to it; and ere they can be ſo, theſe bodies at leaſt muſt be deſtroyed: and what odds is there between that, and creating man at firſt out of the duſt of the earth? As to the metaphyſical

phyſical jargon of new faculties, and cleanſing the old from their natural corruption, what is it they call faculties? Are they any thing but the vital powers the man is poſſeſſed of for anſwering the ſeveral purpoſes of life? And if theſe are naturally ſo corrupted, that he who is ſuppoſed in poſſeſſion of them cannot exert them; that is, cannot do what theſe powers are deſigned to do; is not this ſaying, the man has powers, and yet has them not? The moſt that can be ſaid of man in his natural ſtate is, that he has a capacity of receiving ſuch powers whenever God ſhall ſee fit to give him them: and ſo he would have been if he had no faculties at all. And if we run over all the ſtations and conditions of man, from paradiſe down to this time, it will be found, that he neither had, nor could have, ſuch powers as thoſe we are ſpeaking of; that is, ſuch as ſhall qualify him for the Chriſtian life in the ſpiritual and eternal worlds; and that there is juſt as properly a new creation of the ſoul in regeneration, as there is of the body at the reſurrection: The ſubſtance is the ſame; but the life, and all

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the vital powers, as different as the two worlds are; which will, I hope, appear very evident, by the further obſervations we have to make.

2. The Chriſtian life ſtands entirely, in the whole, and every part of it, in the free ſovereign grace of God; ſo that there is nothing left for the Chriſtian, but to live and enjoy the proviſion made for him by his heavenly Father. This, I am aware, will ſound very oddly in the ears of thoſe who have employed their whole time and labours to convert religion into a ſort of ſpiritual drudgery; by which they muſt either earn or maintain their title to eternal life, and recommend themſelves to the great ſovereign of the univerſe for a ſuitable reward. But we muſt take our meaſures, not from them, but from the account God himſelf hath given of it.

And here it is to be minded, that I do not pitch the diſtinguiſhing peculiarity of the Chriſtian life, and the conſtitution of the new creature, in this, that it is founded in grace, the free gift of the creator, without any concurrence or co-operation of the creature at all. That it has in common with every created thing; and we

might ſay the ſame of its conſervation and ſubſiſtence. But even here there is ſomething ſingular in the new creation, that every ſtep that is taken toward it falls under the creature's obſervation. And there lies the proper uſe of the preſent natural life of mankind, that by the ſenſe and feeling they have of their preſent being, they can feel themſelves dead to the Chriſtian or ſpiritual life, and can obſerve, nay, and actually feel, the conception and birth of the new creature, and perceive free ſovereign grace in every part; much more ſtill in the preſervation and growth of it toward perfection.

And there it is that the ſingularity of the divine life appears moſt eminently, that grace runs through the whole of it, from the beginning to the end, in every ſtation and degree of advancement, in the ſupport and ſuſtenance, and all the exerciſes and actings of it. Adam even in paradiſe had ſome employment in the garden, but ſuch as was in ſome ſort analogous to the Chriſtian's; but he had his life in his own hand, and was upon his good behaviour, and therefore could never be perfectly ſecure againſt the fears of death,

death. In his fallen ſtate he was bound, as all his poſterity are, to eat his bread in the ſweat of his brows. But here there is no ſuch thing: the Chriſtian life is of ſuch a nature, that in the very conſtitution of the new nature, he ſtands bound as ſtrongly as what we call inſtinct binds the brute part of the creation to their particular way of living; nay, infinitely more ſtrongly is the Chriſtian bound by his conſtitution to live purely by grace.

The whole conſtitution of the new creation, and particularly this part of it, is founded in what we call very juſtly *the conſtitution of grace*. This is the rule and meaſure, or what we may call *the law of the new creation*. It is the grant of eternal life to man; and ſuch are the preſent circumſtances of mankind, that all have been forced to acknowledge, that the making of ſuch a grant was an act of the higheſt grace. I may not ſtand to enter into the different apprehenſions men have had about the ſtate of this grant, as it is held forth to the world in general; though it would not be hard to ſhow, that it carries, and, by the nature of the thing, the conſtitution as it ſtands can carry, no o-

ther condition but this one, that men will take life in the way that God gives it; and that is abſolutely neceſſary whether it was expreſſed or not. But where it takes effect, and eternal life is given, the grant is ſo circumſtanced, that it muſt be irrevocable; nay, the very nature of the gift makes it ſo, otherwiſe it would not be eternal life. I know what a number of ſilly things have been ſaid about a conditional grant, and a ſtate of probation, and the neceſſity of keeping men in fear of hell, to make them careful and diligent in all the exerciſes and duties of what they call holineſs. Had they known the gift of God, and in whoſe hand the execution of the grant is lodged, they would have found themſelves infinitely better ſecured, and infinitely better ſecurity taken againſt any unrighteous thing entering the new Jeruſalem. The grant itſelf carries not only life abſtractly conſidered, but life provided with all things neceſſary for its preſervation, ſuſtenance, and growth, to its proper perfection, and ſecured againſt all events that can poſſibly happen. And as the fulneſs of life is lodged in the hands of him who has all power in heaven and earth,

earth, and every ſoul that is entered there committed to him, to be raiſed up at the laſt day, and by him put under the keeping of the Spirit and power of the living God, the very Spirit by which he lives; what room is there left for ſuch inſignificant ſupplements?

But there is another view which puts the matter out of all diſpute: By the tenor of the conſtitution of grace, Chriſtians, that is, every one who is truly entered into Chriſt, are all of them children of God through him; no more ſervants but ſons; "and "if children, then heirs, heirs of God, "and joint heirs with Chriſt." Thus is the inheritance ſecured: and though they cannot have life in themſelves, they have what is next to it, the neareſt a creature can go, a child's, an heir's title; and by the gift that is made them of the ſpirit of ſons, "they cry, Abba, Father;" and look to him for their portion and ſuſtenance, as the child in his father's houſe does. And now, what have they? what can they have to do there, but to live and enjoy the proviſion their heavenly Father makes for them? Is this their buſineſs? or are they to gad about, under pretext

of

of providing better for themſelves? or doing ſomething to earn their bread at their Father's hands? The men who can find in their hearts to entertain ſuch imaginations, plainly declare they are ſlaves, and not ſons. Take all the commands of God together, and theſe, to be ſure, take in all duties, they are no more than this one general, to keep cloſe by their Father's houſe, and to make the beſt of the proviſion he has there made for them; or ſhortly, to live by his grace, and the means which are neceſſary to their doing ſo. But,

3. The tenor by which the Chriſtian holds his life, his ſtanding, and all that belongs to it, is abſolutely peculiar. I was obſerving the general tenor, the grant of grace; but it is ſo qualified, that no one Chriſtian ſhall hold by it, or have any pretenſions in his own right, but by Jeſus Chriſt; by his right, and under him, as the head of the whole body.

We have already obſerved how he ſtands in the eternal counſels of God inveſted with the character of a public perſon, repreſenting his whole ſeed, as the firſt Adam did his in the firſt creation; receiving and fulfilling the terms of eternal life

life for them: and accordingly receiving, not only the grant of eternal life, but the fulneſs of it, from the Father's hand, to be conveyed and made over to them in the proper time and way. Upon this obedience of his the grant is founded; and in this way alone is it lawful for any to claim it. To pretend to life in any other manner, is equivalent to a refuſal, and a refuſal carrying the moſt injurious inſinuations againſt the wiſdom or goodneſs of the contrivance; and that themſelves are wiſer, and can preſcribe what becomes the governor of the univerſe, and how ſuch a creature as man is ought to be treated, better than he.

It is hardly imaginable how the perverſeneſs of the heart of man can be more glaringly diſplayed, or carried to a greater height; as this way is not more different from all other ways of holding life, than it is ſingular in its excellency, in all the views that can be taken of it. We have had occaſion to obſerve, how precarious all creature-holdings naturally are, and particularly thoſe which ſtand upon terms and conditions to be performed by ſuch creatures as men are, even in the beſt eſtate

ſtate they can be in. The only ſecurity is an irreverſible grant by the mere grace of the creator. This is the preſent caſe; but with this ſuperadded advantage, that it is eſtabliſhed on a foundation that ſtands ſtrong as the Deity itſelf; ſealed by the Son of God's obedience unto the death, and further ſealed by his reſurrection, and the glory that followed, and his entering upon the poſſeſſion of it, as he has done, with all power and authority both in heaven and earth in his hand; with this expreſs order of heaven, that all men ſhould honour him, even as they do the Father. There can be no exception taken againſt it but one, that it is below the dignity of the human nature for a man to be obliged to any but himſelf; and even to hold of him who is the head of principalities and powers. But,

4. As this is in truth the higheſt honour and dignity man can be exalted to, as well as his only ſecurity; ſo it is attended with another peculiar diſtinguiſhing ſingularity, which carries the Chriſtian's life as high as a creature poſſibly can be, and brings him ſo near God, that nothing intervenes but Jeſus Chriſt, the bond

bond of the union, and the means of communion between him and them, viz. that the Chriſtian life, with all that belongs to it, is not in themſelves, but all in Jeſus Chriſt; that as he lives by the Father, they live by him; and by his uniting himſelf to them, and them to himſelf, they partake of his Spirit, and live his very life; ſo that it is not ſo properly they that live, as He that lives in them, and works all their works in them, as he has wrought all the terms of life for them.

This has been always treated as a moſt unintelligible myſtery by the men of the world; and Nicodemus's queſtion has been put upon it a thouſand times over, "How "can theſe things be?" And indeed a myſtery to them it muſt be; and ſo would the life they now live be, were they as much ſtrangers to it. And indeed ſuch ſtrangers are moſt men to it, that none of them can ſay ſo much as what it is. They know ſomething by experience and feeling what it is to live as they do; but how theſe things are, they can far leſs ſay than the Chriſtian can in the other caſe. The Chriſtian can ſay, God is the fountain of life; that he can give his Spirit in what

meaſure, and in what manner, he ſees fit, for anſwering the purpoſes which the creature thus formed is deſigned to anſwer. He can ſay, there is no conceivable way how a created ſpirit which has not, cannot have, life in itſelf, can live, but by the Spirit of God thus uniting with it: and he can ſay further, that he has, in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, not only an example, but an illuſtration and evidence at once, as ſenſible as the nature of the thing will admit. And if any one will ſay, how Chriſt is united to the Father? how his Spirit dwells in him in all his fulneſs? how the man Jeſus lives by the Father, and the Father lives in him? he will find there a full anſwer to his queſtion, How Chriſt can live in the Chriſtian? and how the Chriſtian can live by his life? Thus our Lord ſtates the end and deſign of his unction, and all that followed upon it, John xvii. "That they all may be one, as "thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; "that they alſo may be one in us." And, "I have given them the glory which thou "gaveſt me; that they may be one, as we "are one. I in them, and thou in me, "that they may be made perfect in one."

Words

Words cannot be framed ſtronger to expreſs the perfection of the Chriſtian ſtate, and that aſtoniſhing exaltation of the human nature in Chriſt Jeſus: God is in Chriſt, Chriſt is in the Chriſtian; and again, the Chriſtian is in Chriſt, and Chriſt in the Father. There is the union between God and them, and an indiſſoluble peace, and inviolable connection, fixed between God and them, by the mediation of Chriſt, the great bond of the union. God lives in Chriſt, Chriſt lives in the Chriſtian; thus the Spirit of God deſcends in the ſame channel. Again, the Chriſtian lives in Chriſt, by partaking of his Spirit, as Chriſt lives in the Father, by the fulneſs of his Spirit abiding in him; and thus God lives in the Chriſtian, and the Chriſtian in him, by the ſame means, Jeſus Chriſt. And hence,

5. Ariſes another diſtinguiſhing peculiarity in the Chriſtian life, viz. a ſingular ſpirit. By ſpirit, I need not ſay, we here mean, the immediate reſult of the Chriſtian's union with Chriſt, and his Spirit uniting with theirs, in the conſtitution of the new creature; and which the Apoſtle very juſtly calls "the ſame mind which

" was in Jeſus Chriſt." The ſame views of things, the ſame ſentiments, the ſame ſtate of the affections and paſſions; that is, in one word, a temper and diſpoſition every way ſuch as Chriſt's was; and which will eaſily appear to be the native and neceſſary conſequence of ſharing of his Spirit and life.

As the firſt office of the promiſed Spirit is to lead into all truth, John xvi. 13. and that, by taking of Chriſt's, and ſhewing unto them; ſo here is laid the foundation of the whole Chriſtian life, on the diſcovery of the truth and reality, and at the ſame time of the worth and excellency of eternal and unſeen things; which, of courſe, diſcovers the true nature, that is, the vanity and emptineſs of ſuch as are preſent and periſhing. The blindneſs, and conſequent error and folly of the children of Adam is cured; and by ſeeing things in the ſame unerring light our Lord did, they are led into the refreſhing light of divine wiſdom.

It is by theſe the heart is formed into ſuitable ſentiments, and all the affections and paſſions duly poiſed and balanced, under the influence of the Spirt of truth.

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They value and deſpiſe, love and hate, purſue and avoid, things, not by caprice or cuſtom, as the general way of the world is, but on the unerring meaſures of divine truth; a thing in vain attempted by the greateſt maſters of morality. Strangers as they were to the ſyſtem of truth, the weak glimmerings they had of ſome ſmall twigs of it, were by much too weak to anſwer any good purpoſe in minds ſo ſtrongly biaſſed to a preſent world, and ſuſceptible of impreſſions made on their feeble frame.

It will eaſily appear, from this ſtate of their ſentiments and affections, that the Chriſtian ſpirit and temper muſt not only be different from, but directly contrary to, the ſpirit of this world. Our Lord appeared ſo on all occaſions; and thoſe who are indeed his followers are ſo much ſo, that the Apoſtle tells us, the men of the world wonder what they mean. And indeed there is ſo much of a myſtery in it, that thoſe who are not upon the ſecret, who cannot enter into their ſentiments, think them made up of contradictions. The deepeſt humility and ſelf-abaſement, the moſt thorough reſignation to the divine will,

will, and its native fruit, a chearful acquieſcence in whatever Providence lays to their hand, appear to the undiſcerning world certain indications of a mean, low, grovelling, ſpirit, incapable of any high aims or atchievements. But the ſame principle of truth that makes them ſo humble and lowly, raiſes them to the moſt tranſcendent greatneſs of mind. What the men of the world are ſo mad upon, the pleaſures, the power, the crowns and ſceptres themſelves, the higheſt prizes, they look upon as greatly below them, and ſo utterly unworthy of their notice, that none of theſe things can move them. And at the ſame time that they are ſo diffident of themſelves, that they will not dare, nor pretend, to ſtand againſt the leaſt temptation; yet are they poſſeſſed of ſuch exalted courage and reſolution, that not all the powers of hell and earth united can frighten them out of their way. The ſecret of all is, they ſee that theſe, and all their power, are but baubles and bugbears, empty appearances, without any ſolidity. They have infinitely higher aims and proſpects; an inheritance perfectly full, ſecured to them in Chriſt.

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There they reſt; and that ſets them above the reach of every creature. They have nothing to be proud of, becauſe they live only by grace; and yet are ſo ſenſible of the dignity of their ſtation, that they very juſtly deſpiſe every thing elſe. And upon the ſame foundation we might,

6. Proceed to obſerve the diſtinguiſhing ſingularity of the Chriſtian life, in the whole conduct and duties of it; and even draw out, upon this view of it, as *Chriſt living in them*, a complete Chriſtian directory, from the firſt fundamental actings of it in faith, through its immediate fruit, love to God in Chriſt, extended to all that are in him; and thence through all the duties and exerciſes of love, in all the branches of righteouſneſs and holineſs, leading on the Chriſtian, and landing him in a perfect conformity unto his glorious head; abiding in him, and "walking as "he walked." But as we have the life of faith yet before us in the following clauſe, we ſhall ſay no more of it here, but conclude this branch of the ſubject with reminding you, that to have Chriſt living in us is the only thing that can make a Chriſtian. Let us therefore ſtudy

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it carefully, and never ſatisfy ourſelves, without being ſure we are planted into his reſurrection as well as his death. And that we never can be, until we find the power and efficacy of his Spirit and life forming us into the ſame image.

DISSERTATION III.

And the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

HItherto we have conſidered the Chriſtian life, in relation to the way by which the children of Adam have an entrance into it, by partaking in the ſufferings of Chriſt, and being made conformable unto his death; and alſo with regard to the diſtinguiſhing nature of that life they enter upon, by being made conformable unto his reſurrection. But ſo long as any remnant of Adam hangs about us, particularly theſe bodies we derive from him, in that cloſe connection they ſtand with our ſpirits, the life of Chriſt can never be perfected in us; which occaſions that conflict we find pointed out, and always

ways ſuppoſed in the New Teſtament, between the fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh. Theſe make the old and new man, and their reſpective deeds.

But as the Apoſtle's rule holds univerſally, "While one is at home in the bo-"dy, he is abſent from the Lord;" it is in vain to look for the perfection of the Chriſtian life in a preſent world. The way of living in and out of the body, the diſtance we are held in from Chriſt, and the glory of the ſpiritual world, by that fleſh we carry about with us, and the ſeeing him face to face, muſt be entirely different.

This is what the Apoſtle here obſerves of himſelf. Though *Chriſt lived in him*, (and indeed it was only by his living in him that he lived at all, now that he was *crucified with Chriſt*), yet *he lived this life in the fleſh;* that is, in the body he derived from the firſt Adam; whereby he ſtill continued to have ſome connection with Adam's world. But though he could not live at preſent as thoſe will do who ſhall be raiſed up with ſpiritual and incorruptible bodies at Chriſt's ſecond coming, bo-

dies every way fitted for the world they then enter upon; nor even as the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect do, when releaſed from their connections with a preſent evil world; yet, while he lived in the fleſh, and to all outward appearance as other men do, he warred not after the fleſh, but acted by an inward unſeen principle: *He lived by the faith of the Son of God.*

And as the Apoſtle places this principle in a double oppoſition, to *ſenſe* on the one hand, by which natural men live in this world; and to *ſight* on the other hand, the way of living in the next; he gives us a good hint, or rather a fair illuſtration, of the nature of it. Faith is the principle of ſpiritual activity in the life which the Chriſtian lives in this world; and anſwers the ſame purpoſes preciſely that *ſenſe* does in the children of Adam naturally, and that *ſight*, or the ſenſes of the new creature perfected by the reſurrection, ſhall do in the world to come. And as theſe ſerve mainly, or we may ſay only, to bring ſuch facts as we have any concern in under our obſervation, with their circumſtances, and relations to other things we are connected with,

with, this leads us to conſider faith in the ſame view. And ſo the Apoſtle deſcribes it to us, Heb. xi. 1. "Faith is the evi-"dence of things not ſeen, and the ſub-"ſtance of things hoped for." So our tranſlators render it; and thus the caſe really ſtands. The things the Chriſtian has to do with, are either ſuch as though they have a real being, yet are in their nature inviſible, and do not fall under the cogniſance of any of our ſenſes; and ſuch is the preſent ſtate of the ſpiritual world; or ſuch as have no ſubſiſtence as yet, but are to be brought into being in their proper time; which will be the ſtate of the new creation when this world ſhall have an end. Now, faith is the evidence, the demonſtration, or what gives the certain aſſurance, of the truth and reality of the ſpiritual world, and brings it under our obſervation and cogniſance with as much certainty as if we ſaw it with our eyes; and though the things of the world to come are only objects of hope, yet faith gives them a ſubſiſtence, a real ſtanding in our obſervation and regard, as much as if they were really preſent.

It may be ſaid, That our natural life is

injuriouſly degraded, when it is repreſented as ſtanding entirely in ſenſe; whereas there is a far more noble principle, that of reaſon, equally natural to man. It is ſo indeed; and it is the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the human life, whether we conſider the man as in Adam or in Chriſt; and it has much, we may ſay altogether, the ſame province, and anſwers the ſame, or analogous, that is, ſimilar purpoſes, both in the natural and ſpiritual life. But that is by no means to diſcover new facts that were not brought under our obſervation by ſenſe or faith; its ſole buſineſs is, to improve the notions given by them to the beſt advantage, and apply them to their proper purpoſes, which it does in a variety of methods, too many ſo much as to be enumerated here.

And here it is to be obſerved, that we have, even in the natural life, ſubſiſting as it does upon ſenſe, a pretty ſtrong image of the Chriſtian's way of living by faith. There are but a few things that fall directly under our obſervation, confined as we are to a very ſmall ſpot of earth. It is information, and the report of what other men have obſerved, that we ſtand obliged

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to for by far the greateſt part of the facts, or knowledge we have of things; even ſuch as our worldly intereſts have the greateſt dependence on. It is on the faith of theſe men live and carry on their greateſt and moſt momentous buſineſs, which themſelves have no experience of, until they try them firſt on the credit of other men.

It is not refuſed by any perſon, that the teſtimony of God is infinitely greater than that of men; and the thing is ſo obvious, that it is extremely aſtoniſhing to find it ſo little regarded. But we may lay it down as a general rule, that it will be juſt as much regarded as God himſelf is; and whenever the thing comes to be ſeen as it is, ſomething of Atheiſm will always be found at the root of infidelity; and that theſe two always go hand in hand. This, I am aware, will be conſtrued a very uncharitable cenſure by numbers of men. They have been inſtructed to delude themſelves, very plauſibly, with a pretended want of evidence, that the ſcriptures we have are indeed a divine record. The evidence is as full in the view of reaſon as the ſubject can admit of: and one may defy the moſt fruitful imagination to

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pitch upon any one particular thing that can be added to what we have; unleſs it be, that the revelation is not made, with all the advantages it has, to every particular perſon. This will be allowed by men of reaſon to be a very unreaſonable demand; and yet one may venture to ſay, that even this demand is not ſo little complied with as is commonly deemed.

We have had occaſion oftener than once to obſerve upon the natural ſtate of mankind, that the mere children of Adam want the Spirit, (the life and powers to diſcern and apprehend ſpiritual things), which is only given in Chriſt Jeſus. If this be the caſe, and every man who attempts it muſt feel in himſelf that it is, "That the natural man receiveth not the "things of the Spirit of God, neither "can he know them, becauſe they are "ſpiritually diſcerned;" ſuch men can be no judges of what is, and what is not a divine teſtimony: nor is there any way but one of attaining a capacity of judging; namely, that they put themſelves under *his* inſtruction and direction who has the giving of the Spirit. This is the *will* of God, which, as Chriſt himſelf hath declared,

declared, whoſoever ſhall be willing to ſubmit to, ſhall know of his doctrine whether it be of God, John vii. 17. They muſt therefore act very prepoſterouſly, who complain of want of evidence, and yet refuſe to put themſelves into the only ſituation in which this evidence is to be ſeen. It is as much as to ſay, that they will not believe this to be the record of God, unleſs ſome part of it is notoriouſly falſe.

This, I am aware, will be looked upon as a very prepoſterous proceeding by many; that they ſhould comply with the intention of the teſtimony before they can be ſure that it is either true in itſelf, or the witneſs of the God of truth: and yet it is no more than men do in numberleſs caſes, where they have not any grounds of aſſurance comparable to what they have in this caſe. There are multitudes of inſtances where there is no way of knowing whether the teſtimony of weak fallible man is true but by trying; which nevertheleſs they do without any ſcruple at all. And yet it may be allowed, that there would have been ſome colour in the allegation, if our Lord had not proved his divine miſſion by every evidence that could

could be given of it, and ſome which would never have entered any man's head to look after; ſuch as, his reſurrection from the dead, and ſending the Holy Spirit, according to his promiſe, in ſo ſenſible a manner, on his diſciples and followers. But, after all, we are aſſured, that "no man will come to Chriſt, unleſs the "Father who hath ſent him draw him."

This, one will ſay, is raiſing a greater difficulty: for if that be the caſe, it is in vain to attempt putting ourſelves in a proper poſition for ſeeing the evidence; and "why doth he yet find fault," when he does not draw us, and we cannot come without it? I might obſerve, in anſwer to this, that it is not ſaid, no man *can*, but that no man *will*, or does actually, come, unleſs he is drawn: and if the fault lies in our own will, we have none to blame but ourſelves. This indeed is always the caſe where men do not comply with the divine order; but I dare not ſay it is the whole caſe. "Faith is not of our-"ſelves, it is the gift of God;" and in truth as hard a taſk as to keep the whole law. It is a leſſon haughty man wants much to be taught, "that of themſelves they can

"do

"do nothing;" and yet it is a leſſon which even nature itſelf might teach us, if we would but try what we can do, and be inſtructed by experience. And if this doth not ſatisfy us of the abſolute neceſſity of divine aſſiſtance, and determine us to deny ourſelves, and live ſolely by grace, we are unfair reaſoners, and yet more unfair practitioners. Vain is the pretence of ſincerity, and doing what we can, if we do not take all the help that any how can be had.

And thus much of faith in general, juſtly called the foundation of a Chriſtian life. But the Apoſtle ſpeaks of it here in a particular view, *the faith of the Son of God.* Not as if that either excluded, or could be ſeparated from faith, in the moſt comprehenſive ſenſe it can be taken in; ſo far from it, that as the whole record of God centres and unites in Chriſt, the faith which reſpects him, that is, which preſents him to our obſervation, neceſſarily takes in the whole mind of God; which ſtands all of it very nearly related to him. But the Apoſtle pitches upon this view, as the moſt comprehenſive, and from which the whole objects of faith derive their life,

their power, and efficacy; and without which they would be ſo far from anſwering any purpoſe, that they would be abſolutely unintelligible, and could never approve themſelves the oracles of the infinitely wiſe God.

But there is another reaſon why the Apoſtle here pitches upon this view of faith; becauſe hereby it is that the Chriſtian lives by, and we may ſay, lives upon, the Lord Jeſus living in him. It is an anſwer to a queſtion which might be very pertinently put upon what he had ſaid: How he could ſay he lived, when in truth it was not he, but Chriſt that lived in him? It is obviouſly the ſame thing, as to all the intents and purpoſes of life, whether the vital powers he felt in himſelf, and had all the benefit and enjoyment of, were ſupported and maintained in him immediately from God, by Chriſt, or by any other imaginable means, if there were any ſuch. It was by the faith of Chriſt living in him that he had not only all powers, but the exquiſite pleaſure of the peculiar honour and advantage of ſuch a life as this is, in all reſpects the moſt excellent any creature whatſoever can enjoy.

Two things then lie before us, in diſcourſing

courſing of this ſo neceſſary and important ſubject:

1. How we are to underſtand the faith of Chriſt here; and,

2. How the Chriſtian lives by this faith.

I. The faith of Chriſt may admit of three different meanings; which yet can occaſion no manner of diſtraction or confuſion where they are duly underſtood, becauſe they mutually ſuppoſe and run into one another; and ſo thoroughly, that no one of them can ſubſiſt in the preſent caſe without the other. It may denote,

1. Chriſt's perſonal faith, as it ſubſiſted, and ſtill ſubſiſts, in himſelf.

2. The record and teſtimony concerning him, which is to be believed. And,

3. Faith, as it ſubſiſts in the Chriſtian, on the belief of the record.

1. We are to conſider Chriſt's perſonal faith, and how the Chriſtian lives by it; that is, the faith which he had while he lived with men in the world;—and that faithfulneſs which he ſtill continues poſſeſſed of, now that he is exalted in his glory. Both theſe are to be taken in, as the original word ſignifies the one as well as

the other; and they are both inſeparably connected in him.

That our bleſſed Lord, while he was upon earth, lived by the ſame faith of eternal and unſeen things, and acted accordingly on theſe principles with his diſciples and followers, cannot be doubted; as this is a conſiderable, and even a fundamental, part of their conformity unto him, as the pattern which they are formed upon. Large allowances muſt indeed be made of perfection in him, which they, even the beſt of them, are but faintly aiming at: He poſſeſſed the fulneſs of that ſpirit of faith which each of them hath only in his meaſure; but otherwiſe he condeſcended to live and act juſt as other men do; being in all things, except ſin, made perfectly like his brethren.

But that which we have peculiarly in our eye when we ſpeak of the Chriſtian's living by the faith of Chriſt, is that which was peculiarly his, in his public character, undertaking, and fulfilling the terms of eternal life; that faith in God, and his promiſes in the everlaſting covenant; the kingdom therein ſecured to him, with all that belongs to the frame

and

and conſtitution of it. It was in the ſtrength of this faith that he "became "obedient even unto the death; and for "the joy that was ſet before him, endu- "red the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and "is ſet down at the right hand of the "Majeſty on high."

This faith of his all Chriſtians are very nearly concerned in, as there the foundation of all their hopes is laid; becauſe there were laid the foundations on which the grant of eternal life is firmly and irrevocably eſtabliſhed in that kingdom of his which cannot be moved. What was there ſecured to him, as the reward of his obedience of faith, and the glory he brought to his heavenly Father thereby, becomes, in the virtue thereof, a gift of grace to them: for this is the record, "That God "hath given to us eternal life, and this life "is in his Son;" ſo that it is as impoſſible it can fail, as that the promiſe of God to his own Son can. Thus far then all Chriſtians live by his faith, as he has thereby obtained for them an unalienable right of ſubjects in his eternal kingdom, on the ſame ſecurity by which the kingdom is ſecured to himſelf;

himſelf; ſo that if he lives and reigns, they muſt alſo live under him.

But it is not a bare ſecurity he has by his faith obtained for his diſciples and followers; though the bare promiſe of a faithful God is as good as any creature can deſire; much more when ratified in ſo ſolemn a manner, and connected ſo inſeparably with the kingdom and glory of Chriſt. But it does not ſtop even here: Our Lord, the Chriſtian's head and repreſentative, has the kingdom put into his hand; and in their name, as well as his own, has taken poſſeſſion of all the fulneſs and neceſſary proviſion for eternal life. He ſtands poſſeſſed of all the fulneſs of God, his Spirit, and his power; and has all that life in himſelf which ever any of them ſhall have occaſion for throughout all the ages of eternity.

And all this ſecured unto them by his inviolable faithfulneſs, tried in the ſevereſt manner, and approved to ſuch a degree, that the faithfulneſs of Moſes, though atteſted by him that cannot miſjudge, was in no wiſe comparable to it. And this is the other ſenſe of the faith of Chriſt we obſerved, and which continues,

and

and will do, for ever inviolable. And thus the Chriſtian lives by the faith of Chriſt, conſidered as ſubſiſting in *him*; the faith which he acted by in his great undertaking, and the faithfulneſs which is eſſential to him in his exalted ſtate. There the foundations of the Chriſtian life are laid ſo deep and ſtrong, "that the "gates of hell cannot prevail againſt it." And this at once is the pattern and foundation of all that faith which is acted by the Chriſtian himſelf, on all the occaſions and exigencies of the Chriſtian life. But,

2. We are to conſider the faith of Chriſt which the Chriſtian lives by, as it may ſignify that which is to be believed concerning him, viz. the record which God has made, and the teſtimony he has given concerning his Son. Thus we find mention frequently made of "the faith deli-"vered to the ſaints;" "of preaching the "faith;" continuing in, and denying or erring from it; ſo frequently, that there can be no queſtion about it. See Acts xxiv. 24.; Gal. i. 23.; 1 Tim. iv. 1.; v. 8.; and vi. 10. &c. And as the record is expreſsly deſigned to ſet forth Chriſt, to bring him under our obſerva-

tion,

tion, in his perſon and character, the ends and purpoſes he is deſigned to anſwer, and how every way fit he is to anſwer them all, his faith, eſpecially the heroic exerciſe of it in the moſt trying caſes, the ſucceſs and fruits of it, as we were juſt now hinting them; it may juſtly be ſaid, that he is the great, and in effect the only ſubject of the whole; nor is there any thing there which does not ſome how or other relate to him. This is the great ſubject of the Chriſtian's faith; it is what he believes; the facts on which he builds the whole of his conduct! and ſtanding thus ſo cloſely connected with faith as it ſubſiſts in Chriſt, we cannot conſider them ſeparately. And therefore, without inſiſting on it at all in this ſeparate view, we proceed,

3. To conſider the faith by which the Chriſtian lives, as it ſubſiſts in, and is acted by himſelf; a point one ſhould think not at all hard to adjuſt, when we once know what we are to believe concerning him. When God ſpeaks to man in words commonly uſed among them, there is all the reaſon in the world to think they are uſed in the ſame ſenſe, unleſs there be a very expreſs intimation of the

the contrary; and yet, I know not how, by the learned labours of ſuch as have handled this ſubject, faith is become, in the apprehenſion of multitudes, ſo abſtruſe a thing, and hard to be underſtood, that it is not thought poſſible for ordinary Chriſtians to make any thing of it. And thus it fares in all caſes where men undertake to give minute philoſophical definitions of what can only be known by ſenſe or feeling. The ſimpleſt of mankind know, or rather feel, what it is to believe or not believe, better than the acuteſt philoſopher ever was or can be able either to deſcribe or define it. The difficulty, if there be any, muſt ariſe from what is the object of faith, or the thing to be believed; and when this is agreed, the only way to ſpeak intelligibly, is to have recourſe to mens experience, obſervation, and feeling, in common caſes; and thence it will be very eaſy to ſet all the views of the Chriſtian faith, in its nature, exerciſe, and conſequences, in an eaſy and familiar light.

Something of this kind we have already attempted in the general view we were giving of the Chriſtian's faith, and need

only accommodate what was there obſerved to the faith of Chriſt, with this ſingle obſervation, That though faith, and believing, are for the moſt part promiſcuouſly uſed in our language, as importing the ſame thing, and are indeed very nearly related; yet faith very commonly expreſſes ſomething beyond bare believing, but which is yet a natural and neceſſary conſequence of it. Thus we are ſaid, very properly, to believe both a fact duly atteſted, and a promiſe when duly circumſtanced; but when we would expreſs the truſt and confidence we have in the promiſer, though, in truth, it is no more than believing he will do as he has ſaid, we rather expreſs it by faith in him.

And this leads us to conſider the Chriſtian faith, as it is commonly expreſſed in the ſacred books, the faith of Chriſt, or faith in Chriſt, in the relation which it muſt bear to the record, and the teſtimony which we have there concerning him: There we muſt look for the foundation of all the ſeveral names, deſcriptions, and expreſſions, that are applied to it; which are indeed many, and give different views of faith, but ſtill it is the ſame thing at bottom;

tom: and all theſe are founded on the ſeveral parts of the divine record, and the different views that are there given of Chriſt. And here,

We need not ſtand much on the general, which is the foundation of all the reſt, viz. the view which is there given us of Jeſus Chriſt; who he is; what place he holds in the univerſe, and particularly in relation to man; his perſonal excellency; his birth, life, death, reſurrection, and the glory that has followed; his preſent ſtate; and what we have to expect at his ſecond appearance, and the full manifeſtation of his glory. It is by theſe accounts we have him brought under our obſervation; and by believing what we have thus atteſted concerning him, we are enabled, at leaſt a foundation is laid, for enabling us to form a proper judgement concerning him; his perſonal excellency and worth; how he is to be eſteemed and valued; and how far we have any concern with him in his public character; and what we have to hope or fear from him.

I need not obſerve, how this is the only means we have, in our preſent ſtate, of

being acquainted with him. Before he made his appearance among men, thoſe who were moſt concerned in him, and longed moſt for his coming, the men who had the promiſes, could have no more than a very imperfect knowledge of him. When he appeared in the fleſh, thoſe who ought to have known him beſt were moſt miſtaken about him; and now that he is returned to the Father, he is as remote from ſenſible obſervation as before he came in the fleſh, or indeed as God himſelf is. And yet we have no reaſon to complain, when both the Father and the Son are ſo fully manifeſted by the works done by them, which we have clearly recorded, and full inſtructions given us how we are to improve them to the beſt advantage. The hiſtorians give us the facts; and the prophets and apoſtles teach us at large what uſe we are to make of them. Had it not been for the facts, no inſtructions could have been found level to our capacities: and had we been left with the bare facts, they had either paſſed by unobſerved, or neglected, by the greater part of mankind. But by the unerring reaſonings on theſe, by the inſpired

red writers, and the conſequences deduced from them, we are taught how to reaſon upon them likewiſe; and thereby have as much the benefit of them, and more than if we had ſeen them with our own eyes, where-ever the record is received, and really believed.

This is ſo eaſy and plain a view of the Chriſtian faith, that it is hard to conceive how men ſhould miſtake it; and many have imagined, that it was not for want of faith, but ſomething elſe, that the practice of thoſe who are called Chriſtians comes ſo far ſhort of what their principles ſeem neceſſarily to lead to. And yet, when one conſiders how neceſſarily the belief of theſe influence the practice, where they are really believed, one cannot help thinking, that the defect muſt lie here; and when the thing is duly conſidered, it will appear, that multitudes, even of thoſe who think themſelves very good believers, miſtake ſomething for faith, which falls in all reſpects greatly ſhort of it.

It is evident, that the greateſt numbers of thoſe who have appeared of late in defence of Chriſtianity, againſt the attacks of infidels, and thoſe who very unjuſtly ap-

ply

ply the name of freethinkers to themſelves, reſolve the whole of Chriſtianity into one general principle, That the ſcriptures are the word of God; while there is hardly one diſtinguiſhing principle of it which is not given up by one or other of them: and many have gone ſo far as to aſſert roundly, that Chriſtianity is no more but a republication of what they call the law of nature. All beyond that goes for myſtery: and the bold maxim of one of them is ſwallowed down with applauſe by the party, *That where myſtery begins, religion ends.* Upon this is founded a looſe general implicit faith, that the record is true; while they are as ignorant of the contents of it, and as unconcerned about the moſt important of them, as the remoteſt inhabitants of Japan, or of the unknown wilds of America. What monſtrous folly is it to imagine that this has any reſemblance of the Chriſtian faith, any more than that of the blind bigotted Papiſt, who pleaſes himſelf with believing as the church believes, without knowing a tittle of her creed?

Near of kin to this is that looſe, heedleſs belief, which thoſe who live among Chriſtians

Chriſtians naturally fall into, as they take up the other faſhions and cuſtoms of the place where they happen to be born, and of the people they live among. It is a part of the courſe of the world, and they do but ſuffer themſelves to be carried down the ſtream. In this way one may come to know a great deal about Chriſt, what Chriſtians ſay of him, and even what the Bible ſays; but they cannot ſo properly be ſaid to believe, as not to diſbelieve. They read perhaps the ſtory of Chriſt, as they do that of a fabulous hero, though ſeldom with half the pleaſure; they go to church with their neighbours, and join in the worſhip there: and they may go yet farther in a form of godlineſs, juſt as they wear their cloaths in ſuch or ſuch a faſhion, without troubling themſelves with any further thought about it, than that their neighbours do ſo.

Since Chriſtians came to ſplit among themſelves into ſo many diviſions and ſubdiviſions as we have ſeen, eſpecially in theſe latter times; ſince implicit faith, the great bond of union in the Romiſh church, came to be ſo univerſally decried; this cuſtomary belief very often degenerates into what

what we may call *party-faith;* and as they who are very ſuperficial, may yet ſooth themſelves into a belief that they are very good Chriſtians, they may at laſt come to be very ſerious in their way: and, of all mankind, ſuch are the fitteſt to become bigotted, and even furious zealots, for the party they have taken a fancy to. As they are ſtrangers to the ſpirit and power of godlineſs, they know no ſtandard of Chriſtianity but orthodoxy; and as they are generally too incapable, and too lazy, to draw their principles from the ſcriptures of truth, the only ſtandard of right believing is the ſenſe of the party; by which they are buried in a ſuperſtitious regard for every trifle their leaders have made any how a part or a pendicle of their ſyſtem; and that ſo deep, that all reaſoning is thrown away upon them, and nothing but divine power can reclaim them.

In direct oppoſition to theſe ſtand a ſet of men, who have made themſelves very remarkable by their high pretenſions to unbiaſſed freedom of thought, and refuſe to be determined by any authority whatever, until they ſee reaſon for what they do. They would indeed be excellent ſpirits,

rits, did they keep up to their profeſſion. But, unhappily for themſelves, and ſuch as have the misfortune to fall under their influence, they abuſe reaſon, by putting it to an employment it was never deſigned for; to diſcover facts which lie without their obſervation, inſtead of judging of, and improving to their proper purpoſes, ſuch as are made known to them: and inſtead of reaſon, they make their own preconceived apprehenſions of things the meaſure and ſtandard of their faith; ſo that nothing ſhall paſs for truth, even upon the authority of God himſelf, unleſs it be agreeable to what they have thought fit to call the eternal and unchangeable nature and reaſon of things: I ſay, what they call ſo; for ſurely the thing itſelf, the real nature and reaſon of things, lies as much out of their reach as the wiſdom of the great creator does. Theſe mens belief then, if they have any, it is evident, can be neither faith nor reaſon, but a ſyſtem of imaginations, formed upon the imperfect and weak obſervations which they were capable of making.

Too nearly related to this is that called *rational Chriſtianity*, ſo much talked of

among our faſhionable writers. I will take no further notice of thoſe, who, profeſſing to acknowledge the record as divine, yet fall ſo entirely in with thoſe who deny it, as to receive nothing upon that authority, until they have tried it by another teſt, and found it, what they call, worthy of God; by which means they have thrown Chriſt and his Spirit quite out of Chriſtianity, with an impudence of boldneſs greatly beyond that of a profeſſed infidel. It is another more conſiſtent ſpecies of them I have to obſerve upon, who will readily acknowledge the record as it ſtands; but muſt firſt be ſatisfied that it is divine, upon what they call rational grounds; that is, ſuch evidence as every thinking man may have by his mere natural powers, without any aſſiſtance from the Spirit of Chriſt. And thus they ſay, revealed religion is founded on what they call natural; and that one muſt believe there is a God, and that this is his word, before they can lay any ſtreſs upon it as ſuch. I will not reſume what I had occaſion to ſay on this ſubject before; nor ſtand any further upon it than juſt to obſerve, that if the Bible be true, this will be

be a moſt effectual method to keep men from ever believing it; for this plain reaſon, that it is by faith, and by faith only, we can know, that the worlds were created by the word of God; and until that principle is eſtabliſhed, we have no *data* whatever to reaſon upon. But were the thing poſſible, the ultimate ground of our belief would not be the authority of God, but human reaſoning; and that might bring ſome philoſophical knowledge, which, perhaps, might make a man to be of the Chriſtian *opinion*, a poor looſe wavering thing, which could never bear ſuch a ſuperſtructure as the Chriſtian life: and ſadly verified it is in the lives of ſuch, exactly deſcribed by our Saviour in his parable of the ſower. And as men, generally ſpeaking, ſuit their ſyſtems to their own experiences; from this unſound root we may derive all the Pelagian refinements that ever have appeared in the world, from the firſt broacher, down to the looſe philoſophical religion of the preſent age.

And here I cannot help obſerving, what has often been objected, and never was nor ever will be anſwered, viz. the inſuperable difficulty which attends this way of reli-

gion, ſo inſuperable that it renders the Chriſtian faith impracticable to the bulk of mankind, who neither are, nor can be philoſophers, nor capable of conceiving theſe learned, and moſt of them very intricate and laborious reaſonings, by which the being, and much more the attributes of God, are pretended to be demonſtrated: and which is yet worſe, it appears directly contrary to plain fact, the experience of the whole Chriſtian world; where we find the account the Apoſtle gives of it verified to a tittle, "Not many wiſe men after the "flesh, not many mighty, not many no-"ble are called. But God hath choſen "the fooliſh of the world to confound "the wiſe; the weak to confound the "ſtrong; and things that are not to bring "to nought things that are.

Not as if the faith of Chriſt were not both a *rational* and a *natural* thing, taking theſe words to expreſs what is agreeable to the true nature and order, or, as we call it, the conſtitution of things as God has eſtabliſhed it. It is in the ſtricteſt propriety both, however miſtaken it has been. It is *natural* for God to create, and the creature to be created, and to receive its life,

life, and all its powers and capacities, from him, "from whom comes every "good and perfect gift;" it is natural and *rational* to live entirely by his grace, and in that way which he has appointed; and to attempt any other way is irrational, it is unnatural and fantaſtical. What can be more ſo, than for men to pretend to make themſelves; to work up the low powers they have by their firſt creation to thoſe which belong only to a ſecond? Such is faith; it is the way by which the children of Adam created again in Chriſt Jeſus live. Thus the Apoſtle brands the fooliſh device, when he ſays, "His ſpeech "and his preaching was not with the "perſuaſory words of human wiſdom;" though no body will ſay it was for want of ſkill, that knows any thing of him; "but in demonſtration of the Spirit and "power;" and that for a very ſpecial reaſon, "that their faith ſhould not ſtand "in the wiſdom of man, but in the power "of God:" A foundation greatly more agreeable to the whole plan of creation, where no creature can have any thing but what it has received.

The Chriſtian's faith, then, muſt be conceived

ceived of as that ſpiritual perceptive power in the new creature, by which he actually perceives the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in that ſpiritual, rational light, in which the Spirit of God has ſet him forth in the holy ſcriptures, the only rule and meaſure of our belief; and which gives an anſwerable experience, and inward ſpiritual ſenſe, of the truth and reality of what is there atteſted concerning him; ſuch as no man can poſſibly have any notion of but ſuch as have the ſame experience, any more than a blind man can perceive the light of this world, or form any notion how material objects are perceived by it.

From this account of the faith of Chriſt ſome ignorant preſuming men have ſuffered themſelves to be deluded into a notion, that they were honoured with viſions and revelations, and inſpired with the divine Spirit, as the prophets were. But madneſs, or an over-heated fancy, is not faith. This reſts ſoberly in the mind of God, revealed in the ſcriptures, and never ſeeks to be wiſe above what is written; the meaſure of wiſdom which our gracious God has laid ready in his Son. Whatever pretends to riſe higher, or reach farther,

farther, we are ſure has not, cannot have the Spirit of God.

And hence we may be directed how to take our meaſures of the Chriſtian's faith, ſo as to have it diſtinguiſhed from all counterfeits, that we may not ſuffer ourſelves to be impoſed on with deceitful appearances. The holy ſcriptures are the rule; and the views which are there given of Chriſt are thoſe which faith gives, and theſe it muſt come up to. Whatever either goes beyond or ſtops ſhort in any reſpect, is either groundleſs preſumption, or at leaſt ſome degree of unbelief. But as this is of peculiar uſe to the Chriſtian, we ſhall conſider the views of Chriſt ſomewhat diſtinctly, as faith preſents him to our obſervation, from the account made of him in the divine record, both in their general nature, and in the particular purpoſes the ſeveral views anſwer to the Chriſtian in the life of faith.

As to the general nature of the faith of Chriſt, or belief of the record concerning him, it may be worth while to obſerve the few following inſeparable properties of it.

1. The views of faith are all of them true

true and real, founded in the account God has given of his Son, unmixed with any fanciful imaginations of our own. Never was there a more ſacred ſubject, that is, one where trifling was leſs allowable, or more dangerous; where no leſs than the ſacred character of the Son of God is ſo deeply concerned; the character of him whom the Father hath ſealed, and ſent into the world, and that upon the moſt important and ſerious buſineſs, with expreſs aſſurances, that no man knows him, nor can know him, any further than he has manifeſted him.

And yet no where have men more indulged the licentiouſneſs of imagination, both in the firſt and latter ages; while they have preſumed to ſay, not only without record, but in oppoſition to the plain words, what he is and is not, what he has and has not done; nay, what he muſt be, and what purpoſes, and no other, he has anſwered, and deſigned to anſwer: and as there is no end of whimſical imaginations, there has not been one ſingle point, relating either to his perſon or offices, but it has either been denied or explained away. No wonder if ſuch unhallowed

hallowed boldneſs is puniſhed with infatuation, and what the Apoſtle calls a *reprobate ſenſe*. All theſe things faith gives ſatisfaction in; but gives it upon a ſober and ſatisfying foundation; the teſtimony of him that ſent him into the world, the ſame with his own. And as the teſtimony is true, ſo are the apprehenſions and conceptions which faith forms upon the credit of it; and that with infinitely greater certainty than ever they could have been made out by perſonal obſervation, with the aſſiſtance of all the learning and wiſdom the world could furniſh out. But,

2. That the views of faith may anſwer the record, they muſt extend as far as that does, and be every way adequate to it, without overlooking any particular which conſtitutes the character of Chriſt, or even any circumſtance which is recorded to illuſtrate it. It is in the nature of divine faith to copy exactly: and there is good reaſon for doing ſo, becauſe we are ſure the original is perfect; there is neither defect nor ſuperfluity, nothing left to pick and chuſe on. He himſelf never either did or ſaid a needleſs thing; and

ſurely nothing divine wiſdom has ſeen fit to record can be conſtrued ſuch. All partial views of him are ſo far wrong ones; ſomething is wanting to make out the perfection of beauty, and ſomething that we have occaſion for. It was on this account that the Apoſtle "determined to know "nothing but Jeſus Chriſt," and "counted all things but loſs and dung for the "excellency" of that knowledge: and every true Chriſtian is of the ſame temper; becauſe in him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. And,

3. Faith's views muſt be diſtinct and orderly; every thing muſt lie in the mind juſt as it does in the record, if we propoſe to make the proper advantage of them. To make a juſt picture, the ſame ſymmetry of parts and features muſt be preſerved that is in the original. The Apoſtle gives us an exquiſite view of this, where he preſents the record, the form of ſaving words, as a mould into which the true Chriſtian is caſt, and moulded into an exact conformity unto it; ſo as to bear the impreſſion not only of the figure and ſhape, but of every line and particular draught which is there. This is the work

of

of faith; and nothing but a perfect faith can do it perfectly. The goſpel-record is of vaſt compaſs: it takes in both God and man, time and eternity; and indeed every thing, both in the old and new creation, we have any concern with. The weakneſs even of the renewed mind cannot take in the whole; it muſt be done by parts. And the all-wiſe author of the record has condeſcended to our weakneſs in the gradual revelation he has there made of his Son; where one ſcene ſo prepares for and introduces another, that one can never ſee him diſtinctly, nor to advantage, but by beginning where he begins. He has condeſcended further to provide a variety of images, to help our conceptions, and raiſe our apprehenſions, ſome taken from nature, and the ſtate of things among men; and where theſe failed, appointing and inſtituting ordinances made for the purpoſe, as we obſerved before. But to keep all theſe in their proper place, and to lay them together, as the truth is in Jeſus, ſo as to make up the entire and regular view; that is, the buſineſs of faith, and what may employ, fully employ, the longeſt life ever a Chriſtian li-

ved. And better employed ſurely no man can be, either in point of intereſt or honour. Broken disjointed views miſrepreſent the great object of faith, and that is the main occaſion of all the miſcarriages of Chriſtians.

4. The views faith gives of Chriſt muſt be ſtrong and lively to affect the heart, and bear the great weight which lies upon it in the Chriſtian life. Faint views make faint impreſſions, and quickly wear out; like thoſe who received the word with joy, but when trouble came, all was over. And indeed there lies the difference, not only between a true and a falſe, but likewiſe between a ſtrong and a weak faith. Abraham is commended, that he did not ſo much as ſtagger at the promiſe: that would have been ſo much of unbelief, as indeed every degree of doubting and wavering is. The foundation of God ſtands ſure and ſtedfaſt; his faithfulneſs cannot fail, nor any word of his fall to the ground. Nor indeed is it poſſible that the Chriſtian can in the leaſt waver in his views, unleſs he loſe ſight, either of the record he has to build on, or of him who is the author of it. All are agreed on this point:

point: ſo much faith as there is, ſo much aſſurance. The ſtrength of faith is always attended with an anſwerable proportion of livelineſs, both in the perception, and in the impreſſion it makes on the ſoul; and both are from the ſame cauſe, the ſtrength and vigour of the ſpiritual life, ſupported and maintained by the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus. When this life languiſhes, ſo, of courſe, do all the actings and exerciſes of it, and faith in a ſpecial manner; which, as it is the firſt and fundamental exertion and acting of life, ſtands inſeparably connected with it. They mutually depend upon and influence each other. Where Chriſt is ſeen as he ſtands in the divine record, eternal and unſeen things appear with ſuch affecting power, as forms the heart upon them, and "changes the ſoul into the ſame image, from "glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of "the Lord." And,

5. This is the laſt thing we have to obſerve, as a diſtinguiſhing character of the faith of Chriſt: Its power and efficacy on the hearts and ſpirits of men for anſwering all the great purpoſes of the ſpiritual life,

life, both for preſerving and maintaining it, and raiſing the poſſeſſors of it to a conformity unto their glorious head. And as it is in this view that the Chriſtian *lives by the faith of the Son of God*, it will deſerve our moſt ſerious and attentive conſideration.

And I know no better way of illuſtrating this part of the ſubject than by taking the record as it lies before us, and the particular views which we have there given us of Chriſt, and ſhewing how the belief of them naturally ſhould influence and form the hearts of men, and will certainly influence thoſe of Chriſtians. To do this fully would be indeed to compoſe a ſyſtem of practical Chriſtianity, and would furniſh matter enough for more than one volume. We can therefore propoſe no more than to touch on the general heads of things, with ſuch hints as may lead the ſerious obſerver into the road of further diſcoveries. And,

1. Here it will be proper to begin with what is the foundation of all the reſt, the conſideration of his perſon and perſonal character.

This,

This, it is eaſy to ſee, muſt take in a very large compaſs, when we conſider him as he is neither man ſimply, nor only God, but both united: nor yet as a man barely aſſumed into ſuch an union with God, as an ordinary creature may be, and all true Chriſtians really are; but the divine and human natures ſo united, that the manhood, however continuing perfectly diſtinct, yet does not, cannot ſubſiſt a moment ſeparated from the Deity. It is very hard to ſpeak intelligibly on ſo ſublime a ſubject, which we have good ground to believe has no parallel in the whole compaſs of the univerſe; and yet when we conſider how entirely a creature, a Chriſtian man for inſtance, may be under the influence and leading of the divine Spirit, that is, how cloſely and intimately the great creator can unite himſelf to his own creature, one would think it ſhould not be hard, by theſe ſteps, to carry up our apprehenſions and conceptions to a perfect and effectual union; that is, to conceive a man whoſe eſſential character it ſhould be, to ſubſiſt no other way than in perfect union with the Father of ſpirits. In that caſe, his eſſence will lie in that very

very union, or rather oneneſs, with God. I may not here digreſs ſo far as would be neceſſary, to bring into any thing of a diſtinct view, *that* union upon which *this* is formed, of the eternal Father, Word, and Spirit, ſubſiſting in the divine eſſence; three plainly diſtinguiſhed by perſonal properties and diſtinct agencies, and yet ſo ſubſiſting and acting in and by one another, that they are, in the moſt proper ſenſe that can be, *one* being: nor how the ſecond of theſe aſſumes the human nature, and unites it to himſelf; which we have repreſented in the record, both by ſuch words and emblems as the language of man can expreſs, or his apprehenſions reach, in what is ſo greatly above him.

However, we are hereby led to conceive of Chriſt as a man, one of the ſame kind with ourſelves, and a brother by nature and birth; but ſuch a man as there was never another ſo highly honoured of God, and brought ſo very near him. And thoſe who have their natural Atheiſm in any degree cured, muſt, on this ſingle account, conceive the higheſt eſteem and veneration for him; which muſt riſe on every advance that is made toward more

aſſured

aſſured and confirmed conceptions of this his eſſential dignity and glory, by thoſe numberleſs methods God has taken to ſet him forth as his beloved Son, crowned with all the pre-eminency and glory that belongs to "the firſt born of every creature;" which we will not here ſtand ſo much as to enumerate, but leave them, from the firſt mention of him in paradiſe, with diſtinguiſhed honour, through all the ſubſequent manifeſtations made to the patriarchs, Moſes, and the prophets, to the time that he was "declared to be the Son "of God with power, by his reſurrection "from the dead," and the evidence finiſhed by ſending the promiſed Spirit upon his diſciples and followers.

Were we left to build upon this foundation, even without any further aſſiſtance, we ſhould naturally expect to find in him perfections of every kind carried as far as they could go. We ſhould expect more, to have them all found in him in an infinitely higher degree than we can either imagine or conceive; becauſe we muſt conceive "all the fulneſs of the Godhead," and conſequently all the fulneſs of divine perfection, dwelling in him. Neither are we diſappointed in theſe expectations by the

assistance afforded us in the record, where we have an account of the discoveries made of those perfections in his conduct and atchievements; those astonishing displays of divine power, in the mighty works done by him, even when he appeared at the lowest in this world: for though he gave himself to be despised and rejected of men, and condescended even to lay down his life; yet nothing can be more evident, than that all this was not for want of power; for at the same time he created food for the multitudes that followed him, commanded the winds and seas, diseases, devils, and death itself, that ungovernable enemy of man; and what is as remarkable as any thing, he could bring the men who came to apprehend him to the ground, by asking a simple question, which could be no surprise to them on such an occasion. But when we add to these the mighty things he did through the Old-Testament administration, and the yet greater after his resurrection, and compare them with the general testimony given him of the Father, of his being perfectly well pleased, or rather perfectly delighted in him; we can have no room left to doubt

of

of every other perfection being in proportion to his power. As theſe views riſe higher and higher the more one comes to be acquainted with him, the more will their eſteem riſe, and the higher their veneration, until they come up to the ſtandard, the will of God, "that all men ſhould "honour the Son even as they do the "Father."

I need but juſt mention after this, (what is the native conſequence of his ſo near relation to God), the high ſtation he holds in the univerſe, and the regard that is ſhown him by every creature that is capable of perceiving his glory. And what creature capable of obſerving one ſo highly exalted of God can miſs to do it; eſpecially after the ſovereign command, that all the angels of God ſhould worſhip him? The devils themſelves, rebels as they are, yet cringed before him, and made their ſupplications to him as their ſovereign, when he appeared at the loweſt. But we muſt proceed,

2. To conſider him in his public character, as he is ſet forth at great length in the ſame record.

I was ſaying, how great excellency and

perſonal worth was to be expected from the aſtoniſhing union of God and man. We have the ſame reaſon to expect ſome very aſtoniſhing purpoſes to be anſwered by this union. Great things indeed we find ſpoken of the place our Lord held in the firſt creation, and ſtill holds at the head of principalities and powers. But it is the new creation that we have repreſented to us as his ſpiritual province, and the children of men there, that church of which he is conſtituted the glorious head. He has indeed all power in heaven and in earth lodged in his hand; but his peculiar buſineſs is to be mediator between God and man. Having ſaid ſo much on this ſubject in the former part, I ſhall neither reſume, nor add to it here, any further than to take notice of that abridgement of it himſelf gives us, John xiv. 6. "I am "the way, the truth, and the life: no "man cometh unto the Father, but by "me."

This is a very intereſting view to the children of men; and cannot fail, where it is believed indeed, to produce in the heart correſponding ſentiments and affections. The way of obtaining the divine favour

favour could never have entered into the hearts of men. Something we find them groping after in the midſt of the moſt Heatheniſh darkneſs; and in their prieſts, their ſacrifices, and their mediator gods and heroes, we can trace ſome veſtiges of truth miſerably mangled by tradition: and even theſe, mangled as they were, were ſo far regarded, that no man durſt truſt his own integrity without them; that refinement was reſerved for greater ignorance in more enlightened times. But when the truth appears as it is in Jeſus, this great and only ordinance of God, for making and keeping peace between him and man, ſets aſide every thing elſe, and puts an end to all the fooliſh hopes and expectations of men by any other means.

This is a great point gained, as thoſe will acknowledge it to be, who have felt in themſelves, or obſerved in others, the miſchievous conſequences of leaning to ſuch means for obtaining the favour of God, and how hard it is to draw off the biaſſed heart, as all mens naturally are, from theſe dead hopes. But, even in this general view, there is another kind of proſpect opened than the children of Adam ever could propoſe in the confuſed

general

general notions of the divine favour they aimed at. What lies neareſt their heart is, ſucceſs in their wordly affairs, and to be kept free from thoſe evils to which they are expoſed in their preſent ſtate. Thoſe who live among Chriſtians have learned to be afraid of hell and the devil, and to be kept from theſe is the utmoſt of their wiſhes. But their notions of immortality and an after ſtate are dark and confuſed. It is in Chriſt Jeſus only, as he ſtands at the head of the new world, that life and immortality are brought to light; and believers, thoſe who ſee him, are enabled to ſee diſtinctly into futurity, and the glory and happineſs of the world to come. They ſee a hell indeed, a place of torment; but the torment there is not the only, nor indeed the main thing they have to fear. There is ſomething in the proſpect of being ever with the Lord, of beholding his glory, of being made like him, the perfection of the bleſſed inhabitants, of inheriting his kingdom, and being crowned with his glory, that engages the heart ſo thoroughly, that it is the perfection of torment to be ſeparated and divided from him for ever.

To

To be ſeparated and divided from Chriſt is, at the ſame time, to be ſeparated from God, the fountain of life, light, and comfort. And it is to be obſerved, that Chriſt and the Father are never divided in the right believer's views, as they are never ſeparated in the record, and cannot poſſibly be in themſelves. This raiſes faith's views yet higher, and gives yet more endearing apprehenſions of the excellency and glory of the new creation. The nearneſs the happy inhabitants are admitted, not only to Chriſt, but through him to God, and his all-ſufficient fulneſs, conſtitutes the true dignity and glory of the human nature; and being made the objects of his deareſt and moſt unchangeable love, renders them completely and eternally happy.

Had we been left with this general view of the divine conſtitution, Jeſus Chriſt ſet up at the head of a new creation, a new world to be reared up by him, and the inhabitants whereof were to be formed out of the preſent race of mankind; it would be hard to ſay what ſentiments, what workings of the heart between hopes and fears, and what anxiety and concern muſt have been

been occaſioned by ſuch a proſpect: and they only can be able to ſay, who have been kept, for ſome conſiderable time, on theſe general views, without any more particular application. But, even in this caſe, they ſtand not properly alone. For,

3. Our Lord's public character, the place he holds, and the offices he bears, are not, in the record, and cannot be, in the views of faith, ſeparated from his conduct and management in the execution of them.

What thoſe offices are which conſtitute his public character, we have in ſome ſort already declared, as they are at large unfolded in the divine record, with all the advantage, and condeſcenſion, that divine wiſdom found proper for conveying them to the underſtanding of ſuch low beings as men are. But all theſe declarations, and all the natural and inſtituted emblems, figures, and repreſentations; the temporal ſaviours and deliverers from time to time raiſed up, with circumſtances appropriated to the purpoſe; with all the anointed prophets, prieſts, interceſſors, and kings, raiſed up from time to time, with the ſame ſort of circumſtances,

ces, would have given us but an imperfect view, had not the Sun of righteouſneſs riſen upon mankind, with life, light, and healing, in his wings, and ſhown himſelf, by his achievements, to be the great prophet, mediator, and interceſſor, the ſovereign Lord and King in the new Jeruſalem. It is in theſe offices, but eſpecially in his manner of executing them, that he ſtands not only in an intereſting, but very endearing light to the children of Adam.

It is very evident, that all theſe offices reſpect them, and that it is with them his buſineſs lies. It is from among them that the inhabitants of the new Jeruſalem, his new world, are to be gathered. But the record has no where ſaid, that all the children of Adam ſhall have this privilege: it ſays the contrary very expreſsly, and the event is anſwerable. He is indeed a prophet, a prieſt, and a king; he is a ſaviour and deliverer to mankind, a mediator between God and them: but he is ſovereign in them all, as God his Father is, from whom he has his inſtructions, and which, we are ſure, he very punctually follows. He has done ſo much, that we are ſure

he is able "to ſave to the uttermoſt:" ſuch is his power, ſuch the value of his all-ſufficient ſacrifice, and the worth of his interceſſion, that there is no ſin ſo great, or ſo greatly aggravated, as to be beyond the reach of his merit, nor any ſinner ſo obdurate as to exceed the bounds of his power. There is no room then left for deſpair; but ſtill there is as little ground of certainty to any. When they ſee, indeed, that he hath done all things well, they cannot but love him, and wiſh themſelves under his care; but, after all, anxiety and diſtreſs muſt continue, until they ſee acceſs for themſelves, in particular, to claim the benefit of all that he hath done.

This diſtreſs, it is true, is much alleviated, when, to the great things he hath done, we add his endearing manner of doing them. Every body knows, that, in the greateſt actions, the manner is as much minded as the thing itſelf, and generally affects us more; and indeed it is in the circumſtances chiefly, that the merit lies, and the ſame action may be either great or little, generous or ſelfiſh, and accordingly

cordingly pleaſing or diſagreeable, as it is managed.

It is the great commendation of our great Redeemer, that he could have nothing of ſelfiſh or intereſted views in his undertaking, any more than God could have in creating the world. The whole intention of it was for the benefit of mankind; they reap all the advantage, and nothing remains to him but the generous and amiable pleaſure of doing good. The glory ariſing from it is nothing to him, becauſe no part of his happineſs depends on it. And when it is conſidered what great things he did, how low he ſtooped, how he pleaſed not, minded not himſelf, and devoted himſelf entirely, his very life and ſoul, to the ſervice of man; how reſolutely, and with the true ſpirit of a diſintereſted hero, he gave himſelf a ranſom for the periſhing ſons of Adam; how he triumphed over death and hell, at the very time he ſeemed to be overcome by them, making a ſhow of them openly on that croſs by which they thought to deſtroy him; how he retains the ſame tenderneſs and affection in the affluence of glory and honour he is entered upon the

poſſeſſion of; and that his very enjoyment of them lies in communicating theſe his unexhauſtible treaſures to his poor brethren, whom he has condeſcended to make ſuch by becoming one of them: when we conſider all this, how amiable muſt he appear? Theſe are very faint ſketches of his perfect beauty, but ſuch as, however carefully ſtudied, can no more be perfectly apprehended, than that love of his from which they flowed.

In theſe views of faith, and the impreſſion they make upon the heart, the ſentiments, affections, and paſſions, peculiar to the Chriſtian life, are further formed and carried on. The man comes to be more and more pleaſed with Chriſt, and, in the ſame proportion, reconciled to God; more and more mortified to the world, and all relations and intereſts inconſiſtent with Chriſt, and his way of ſaving and giving eternal life: the ſoul is drawn out after him, counts them happy beyond expreſſion whom he has choſen and called, and nothing will ſatisfy it without him. But ſtill uncertainty and anxiety mars his pleaſure; he finds no ground for deſpair, yet reckons it preſumption

ſumption to hope until he is led forward.

4. To conſider the record, as it contains a perfect warrant to every ſoul that will, to apply to him, and make uſe of him as their Saviour in particular.

The great ground of this warrant is, the proviſion God has made in him of eternal life, and the gift held forth in common unto the children of men. This is the account the Apoſtle gives of the record; which whoſoever believes not, hath made God a liar: 1 John v. 10. 11. "And this is "the record, that God hath given unto "us eternal life: and this life is in his "Son." And as this is a point of the utmoſt moment, and as the life, as well as the peace and comfort, of the Chriſtian depends almoſt wholly upon it, it has employed the thoughts and pens of almoſt every one who has thought or written at all on theſe ſubjects. And it had been much to be wiſhed, that men had conſulted the record more, and indulged their own apprehenſions and experiences leſs, in theſe matters.

As the Apoſtle ſtates it, and he certainly underſtood it, the gift is full and free, and under no manner of limitation but

but one, if it may be called one, that "this life is in his Son;" whence it unavoidably follows, "That he who hath "the Son, hath life; and he that hath "not the Son of God, hath not life." But indeed this is no limitation at all, if it be duly underſtood. So far from it, that by eternal life being lodged in Jeſus Chriſt, as it is for the behoof of mankind, it is not only given, but ſo far actually ſecured for them, and conveyed to them. And this, of all things that could be imagined, is what makes ſuch a ſurpriſing thing as this is, not only moſt credible, but affords the ſtrongeſt confirmation of it that could poſſibly be deviſed. That there is indeed ſuch a thing as eternal life, cannot be doubted by any who believes that Chriſt is in poſſeſſion of it; and as it is in his public character as mediator, and particularly as a truſtee for both parties, that he is entered on the poſſeſſion of it, it can be as little doubted that it is deſigned for man; and that the promiſe and gift of it is true and real, ſuch as cannot miſs of its effects, but by refuſal or neglect, which are in effect the ſame thing.

But

But ſuch is the weakneſs, and, I muſt add, the perverſeneſs of the human mind, in our preſent low ſtate, that this higheſt ſecurity, on which our faith and hope ſhould be eſtabliſhed with a proportional firmneſs, is ſtrangely miſimproved unto the great occaſion of perplexity and confuſion. "He that hath the Son, hath "life;" that is unqueſtionably true: but it is equally true, "he that hath not the "Son, hath not life." How then ſhall we have him? and how ſhall we know whether we have him or not? And until we know we have him, how can we believe, that God hath given to us eternal life? eſpecially when we are told, that there is an eternal unchangeable election made by the eternal God, of the particular perſons who are given to Chriſt; that for theſe he died, and for theſe, and no others, he intercedes; and conſequently, that to theſe alone he muſt be given, and they only can have him. Thus, by drawing in what it is impoſſible for any man to be reſolved about, faith is at a ſtand, and the whole buſineſs of eternal life along with it.

"We muſt not ſpeak wickedly even for "God,"

God," much leſs for ourſelves: whatever difficulties we find ourſelves or our friends involved in, we muſt not preſume either to vitiate or explain away any part of the record; as I am very certain thoſe do, who will not allow of any election of perſons, but ſuch as is made in time, according to the qualities and previous diſpoſitions of the perſons choſen to eternal life; or that Chriſt redeemed, and died for one more than another: or who affirm, that the gift of eternal life is common equally to all mankind, and only limited by certain conditions, viz. faith and repentance, and ſome add, univerſal holineſs, and perſeverance therein; and that the performance of theſe conditions either gives the right, or at leaſt clears it up to us. And thus they pretend the matter ſtands in the record; and adduce all thoſe places where faith and repentance, with that holineſs of life which inſeparably attends them, ſtand ſo peremptorily enjoined, and damnation denounced againſt all neglectors; to which they add, what ſeems to import, that God wills the ſalvation of all equally, and that Chriſt died for all; though, in truth, univerſal ſalvation is as much in the record, as univerſal redemption

demption in order to it; though in other reſpects, more than one, all men are both redeemed and ſaved by Chriſt.

Was the buſineſs of eternal life well underſtood, I apprehend it would appear, that ſuch a ſcheme of ſalvation has not only no foundation in the divine record, but that it is abſolutely impoſſible in the nature of the thing. By what we have already had occaſion to obſerve, eternal life is none of thoſe things which can be conveyed in the courſe of what we call moral government, nay nor by a mere act of grace, whether abſolute or conditional. It muſt be conferred in the ſame manner, and by the ſame power, that the firſt creation-life was; and is, to all intents and purpoſes, as proper and true a creation as that was, though not extending at firſt to any ſenſible alteration on the body. And yet, as the whole human conſtitution is new moulded by the Spirit of life uniting with the human ſoul, the body too, in its animal affections and paſſions, undergoes a very real and remarkable change. This being the caſe, and that it is ſo the whole record is witneſs, matters muſt be carried on there

in the courſe of creation-grace, where the creature itſelf can have no ſhare, but the glory of all accrues to the creator. And we had occaſion to obſerve how things are ſo ordered, that the creature itſelf is conſcious of, and therefore a witneſs to this great and fundamental conſtitution of the new creation.

This being the caſe; and as it is plain by the event that they are only *ſome* of mankind that are thus choſen, and fitted up to be inhabitants of the new and eternal world, while many, nay we may ſay the bulk of mankind, are one way or other left to periſh; will any imagine that this happens by chance, or any other way, rather than by divine direction?

But the men make high profeſſions of their regard to God, and particularly what they call his moral character, and aſk, with aſſurance, how it is conſiſtent with his juſtice and ſincerity, to call men to believe, and to denounce eternal vengeance againſt them that do not; to make ſuch ſolemn profeſſions of his *own* readineſs and willingneſs to ſave them, and

to

to ſay, that *they* will not, and that their deſtruction is of themſelves?

What if we ſhould anſwer, We cannot tell? and give this good reaſon for our being willingly ignorant of it, that we are none of God's judges? Either the facts are as they ſtate them, or they are not. If they are not, God needs no apology for what is none of his doing. If they are ſo, they are his doings, and he needs none of our aſſiſtance to ſupport his procedure, and it is aſtoniſhing impudence to impeach him. But it muſt be much more ſo when the caſe is conſidered as he has laid it. Whatever commands he has laid on mankind, he has aſſured us, "that of ourſelves we can do nothing;" that faith itſelf is his gift, and cannot be had but by the Spirit of Chriſt. Thence it is evident, that the divine ſincerity is in no danger.

But how comes he to command what we cannot perform? We may aſk again, How he came to ſay, "Let there "be light," and "Let the waters bring "forth living creatures?" And in the new creation, "Awake, thou that ſleep-

" eſt, and ariſe from the dead." It would be very abſurd in man to ſpeak thus; but not ſo in God, who can with a command effect the thing, whatever it be. Our Lord ſtates the caſe as it is, John v. 25. " The hour cometh, and " now is, when the dead ſhall hear the " voice of the Son of God: and they " that hear ſhall live."

But how comes it then, ſay they, that he does not ſecond his command with power? And they may add, if they ſo pleaſe, Why " does he yet find fault? for who " hath reſiſted his will?" Our Lord gives the true reaſon, Luke x. 21. " I thank " thee, O Father, that thou haſt hid theſe " things from the wiſe and prudent, and " haſt revealed them unto babes." He does not refuſe that it was God's doing, or turn it upon man; but lands it here, " E- " ven ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in " thy ſight." And the Apoſtle Paul points ſtrongly to the abſurdity of meaſuring the procedure in the new creation by the rules of moral government: " Who art thou, O " man, that replieſt againſt God? ſhall " the thing formed ſay to him that form-

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" ed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? " Hath not the potter power over the " clay, of the ſame lump to make one " veſſel unto honour, and another unto " diſhonour?" Rom. ix. 20. 21. Theſe things are matters of mere grace; he can be debtor to none, and, without all queſtion, he may do what he pleaſes with his own.

But after all, may one ſay, How can any one believe the record, " that God hath " given him eternal life," when the whole is left ſo looſe, and apparently arbitrary? I anſwer, The whole is indeed left on free ſovereign grace, and there it ſhould and muſt reſt. So long as a ſinner of Adam's race is not content to put it on that iſſue, but inſiſts on the terms of a moral government, he can have no pretenſions to the grace of the new creation, but has a ſpirit utterly inconſiſtent with it. Yet this is ſo far from diſcouraging the hope, and even the faith, of a truly convinced and humbled ſinner, that, of all things that can be imagined, it is the only one that can remove his greateſt diſcouragements, viz. his own vileneſs,

and

and his utter inability to help himſelf; both which he feels ſo ſenſibly, that let ſuch a creature be put under the moſt perfect moral government, and make the terms of life as eaſy as any man dare venture to make them, it would fill him with deſpair, which nothing could remove but the proſpect of a throne of grace, and the life lodged in Chriſt Jeſus.

And when we add to this, that the grant of grace, as it ſtands in the record, is ſo conceived as to exclude none, and that no one of the children of men is more or leſs warranted to apply it than another, there is no ſmall ground of hope. And as the ſentiments and affections formerly mentioned are ſtill carried further upon this view, Chriſt appears ſtill more excellent and lovely, and the life that is lodged in him more deſirable; the heart is more and more knit to him; and the nearer his ſalvation approaches, the more earneſtly will it be purſued: though it muſt always be acknowledged, that however the ſoul is kept waiting, yet it neither doth, nor can make any particular and quieting concluſion, until, under the direction of the

the Holy Spirit, Chriſt and his ſalvation are brought nearer. And that is done,

5. When the Lord Jeſus is ſet forth in the record as ſent of God, to be received by ſinners of mankind; ſet forth, to be believed on and truſted in, for anſwering all the purpoſes of eternal life; and all that hear the record, permitted, called, invited, preſſed, nay very peremptorily commanded, to believe in his name.

I have laid all theſe together; becauſe, however they contain different views, and may be diſtinctly conſidered, when one propoſes to diſcourſe at large upon this ſubject; yet all have the ſame tendency to warrant and oblige the hearers of the goſpel to acquieſce and reſt in Chriſt, as the great ordinance of God for eternal life.

And here we muſt advert to what we before obſerved, of the particular import of believing in Chriſt, when the promiſe of eternal life is ſet before us, as here ſealed and ratified in him. It is the ſame with believing in his name, or being perſuaded that he certainly will anſwer all the purpoſes to us for which he is ſent and given to mankind; which is well expreſſed

preſſed by *truſt* and confidence in him; and for this one needs no other warrant or inducement, after the views we have been taking of him, than God's *permiſſion* to rely upon him; of which we ſhould have had ſufficient evidence, even though we had been left with nothing more than Chriſt ſent unto us, and ſet before us, as he is in the record, choſen and appointed by God to be a perfect remedy againſt ſin, and all its conſequences; and that by becoming ſpirit and life to all that receive him.

Among the many emblems deſigned to repreſent and illuſtrate this truſt or confidence to every capacity, there are two very remarkable ones, viz. the children of Iſrael paſſing from Egypt into the promiſed land; and the brazen ſerpent lifted up in the wilderneſs for the cure of the Iſraelites bitten by the fiery ſerpents. There was an ordinance of God in both caſes: Moſes was ſent with a ſpecial commiſſion; and the brazen ſerpent was ſet up for the whole Iſraelites. Such as believed Moſes, and obeyed, were brought into the land of Canaan, while the reſt fell in the wilderneſs. Thoſe who looked to the brazen

ſerpent

ſerpent lived; whilſt thoſe that did not, died of their wounds. In both caſes, faith or confidence in the ordinance of God was the foundation of their compliance; but it was the power of God that brought them into the land, it was the power of God that healed their deadly wounds.

But when, beſides a permiſſion, we are called (and all that hear the goſpel are called) to believe in him for life, and expect it from him, what can be deſired more? Yet we have more; we are invited in the moſt endearing manner, and the invitation is preſſed by the moſt intereſting motives that can be conceived. What then can be ſaid either for a refuſal or a delay? Nothing ſurely at bottom, but unwillingneſs to renounce all, and venture all in the hands of Jeſus. But it is often pretended, that "many are called, and few choſen;" and how ſhall we know that we are choſen? Why, truly, by no poſſible way in the world, but by giving the motives their due weight, and complying with the call. But we have no ſtrength, no power, to come either to receive Chriſt, or to believe in him. God knows, and has told us, and aſſured

us, that we have no ſtrength. But are you willing to have it? He has laid it ready in Chriſt; and it is the very intention of ſending him, and calling you to receive and truſt him, that you may have both life and ſtrength from him, for every acting and exerciſe of the ſpiritual life.

But ſtill ſome will ſay, (and a very unreaſonable ſaying it is), The call and invitation is not particularly directed to me. It might be a ſufficient anſwer to ſay, You are not excepted, and are as particularly called as ever any that believed was. Some particular kinds of men, labouring under particular diſcouragements, are expreſsly called, viz. "ſuch as hunger and thirſt," "ſuch as labour, and are heavy laden;" and they who find themſelves in ſuch ſituations, may certainly conclude themſelves called in particular. But that none may plead excuſe, the open proclamation ſtands on record, "Whoſoever will, let him "come." Either then you are called, or you are not willing. But be it ſo, that none of theſe things will include you, there is ſomething in the record that certainly will. It is the peremptory command of God, "to believe on him whom he "hath

" hath ſent;" and who dare ſay this is not directed to them?

6. We muſt add to this the fulleſt and moſt unlimited aſſurance of ſucceſs to every ſoul that comes to him, and believes on him.

Nothing can be ſtronger than what our Lord ſays of the love of the Father, John iii. 16. " God ſo loved the world, that he " gave his only begotten Son, that *whoſoever* believeth in him, ſhould not perish, but have everlaſting life." And John vi. 40. he aſſures us, " This is the " will of the Father, that whoſoever ſeeth " the Son, and believeth on him, ſhall have " eternal life." And how ſtrongly does he ſecond his own invitation to come to him in the 37th verſe of that ſame chapter? " *Him* that cometh unto me, I will in no " wiſe caſt out." But what need we mention particulars, when the record is every where full of theſe aſſurances.

It is evident nothing can be deſired, nor even imagined, more expreſs; and where they have not their effect, it muſt be owing to ſomething elſe than want of proper aſſurances; eſpecially when they ſtand connected, as they are, with the perſonal

and public character of the great Redeemer, and the faithfulneſs, and ſteady unbiaſſed love he has ſhown to the children of Adam; the truſt committed to him of the Father, and his open profeſſion of making this his buſineſs, "to ſeek and "to ſave that which was loſt;" how he is ſent to be received, that is, ſet forth to be believed on, and truſted to. Nay, his mediatorial glory and honour is pledged upon it; and the glory of the riches of divine grace. Theſe are great things; and however a broken-hearted ſinner may, and very juſtly may, reckon himſelf below his notice, and much more unworthy of any favour, it is notwithſtanding to be remembered, that he does for his own name's ſake; and he gives, "not by works "of righteouſneſs done by men, but ac- "cording to his own mercy." And that is altogether free. Works cannot recommend, nor the utmoſt vileneſs exclude. Where ſin abounds, grace abounds much more abundantly.

But there is yet a further aſſurance from what our Lord hath told us, That "no "man can come unto him unleſs the Fa- "ther draw him;" and, as a conſequence of

of this, that whoſoever cometh, muſt have "heard and learned of the Father." It is the peculiar excellency of the conſtitution of grace as it ſtands in the ſacred record, and none of the loweſt evidences of divine wiſdom there, that every part contributes to ſtrengthen another, and, with joint force, promote the deſign of the whole. What our Lord there ſays, would, at firſt ſight, ſeem a diſcouragement, and has been often abuſed that way, as if it were an obſtacle laid in the poor ſoul's way, againſt ſo much as attempting to come to Chriſt. It really is not ſo, in whatever light we view it, but a very neceſſary caution againſt attempting to come on any other preſumption than the aids and drawing of the divine Spirit. But a further and much higher uſe of it falls in here: when the ſoul is thus drawn, the heart cloſing with Chriſt, and acquieſcing in the fulneſs and all-ſufficiency of this great ordinance of God, but diſcouraged by the ſenſe and feeling of unworthineſs; the reflection on this, that it is not they, but God himſelf, who hath given ſuch a turn to their hearts, and carried them ſo far, gives the propereſt relief that can be

deſired.

desired. And when the Apostle's determination is added to it, "that he who "hath begun, will perfect the good work "in them unto the day of Christ," they have the fullest assurance, that God will not forsake the work of his own hands.

And now one may very justly conclude the Christian's heart established sufficiently on Christ Jesus, and that he has no more to do but to enter, with chearful confidence, on the proper business and entertainments of the Christian life. But our gracious God does not leave them unprovided there. But,

7. The record contains, and holds forth to us, a fair account of the Christian's state, and the abundant provision that is made for all exigencies and occurrences, in those great and precious promises which are sealed and ratified in Christ Jesus.

What the Apostle says of Christians in general, holds true of every individual, and extends to every condition he is or can be in: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear "heard, nor hath it entered into the "heart of man to conceive, what God "hath prepared for them that love him." And if God had not revealed it unto us by his

his Spirit, which ſearches all things, the Chriſtian himſelf muſt have continued ſo much a ſtranger to his own privileges, that he would have been ready to ſay as Nicodemus did, How can theſe things be? They are indeed ſo many and ſo high, that to ſet them in their proper light, the record itſelf muſt be had recourſe to, which only can do them juſtice.

The Apoſtle gives it in one word: "We are complete in him, who is the "head of principalities and powers." So that the Chriſtian has no occaſion to have recourſe any where elſe, either to circumciſion, and the ritual obſerfervance of Moſes's law, which was the faſhion of thoſe days, or to any thing which men have laid ſtreſs upon ſince: "Neither circumciſion availeth any thing, "nor uncircumſion; but faith that work- "by love."

We have already had occaſion to ob- obſerve, how Chriſtians are *crucified with Chriſt*. By their fellowſhip in his ſufferings, and conformity unto his death, they are crucified to the world, and become dead to the law, ſo that they have nothing

nothing to hope or fear from either. Hereby the dominion of ſin is deſtroyed, and the ſting taken from death; and "if they ſin, "they have an advocate with the Father, "Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, who is him-"ſelf the propitiation for ſin." We have likewiſe ſeen how they are planted into the likeneſs of his reſurrection, and partake of his Spirit and life; how they are united unto him in the neareſt manner, and by him become the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt: and who can declare or fully conceive the excellency of the inheritance?

Here lies their ſupereminent dignity and glory, here lies their perfection and worth; they have all the ſpirit of children, reſembling perfectly their elder brother, that pattern of perfection, on which they are at preſent formed, and which they know that one day they ſhall be perfectly conformed unto; their proviſion is ſecured for them in their Father's houſe, ſecured for them in Chriſt Jeſus: For "he "that ſpared not his own Son, but gave "him up unto the death for us all, how "ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us "all things?" All things are indeed theirs; but

but diſtributed to them, not according to their childiſh humour, but according to the wiſdom of their heavenly Father. Their allowance is lodged in a faithful hand, who will not defraud them of their portion, in ſo much that they are commanded, "to be careful for nothing," but, as becomes dutiful children, "in "every thing by prayer and ſupplication, "with thankſgiving, to make their re- "queſts known unto their heavenly Fa- "ther."

Their weakneſs is indeed great, their wants and neceſſities innumerable, and the difficulties and oppoſition they have to lay their account with ſuch as no created power can ſupport them againſt. Yet are they provided with ſuch variety of great and precious promiſes, ſo ſuited to their exigencies, and all of them "yea "and amen in Chriſt Jeſus," that they can never be at a loſs for matter enough to ſupport their faith, ſo as to enable them even to quench all the fiery darts of Satan. And,

8. We conclude with obſerving, that, in the record, the man in Chriſt is provided with a complete directory how to

walk worthy of the Lord, and the vocation wherewith he is called.

There are three points which ingroſs the attention and make the buſineſs of every living creature, viz. ſuch things as are neceſſary for the ſupport and maintenance of life, — ſuch things as are ſubſervient to growth and improvement, — and ſuch as contribute to the enjoyment of life. Theſe, in a particular manner, are the buſineſs, and the whole buſineſs of that ſpiritual life which the Chriſtian lives in the fleſh. And how ill the children of Adam are qualified for any of them, may be eaſily judged of by the methods the wiſeſt men have purſued, and the moral inſtructions of the moſt refined philoſophers.

Were the new creature made perfect at its firſt entrance on life, it might very well be truſted, in the cloſe union it ſtands with Chriſt and his Spirit. But "the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit," as well as "the Spirit againſt the fleſh;" and reaſon, the common ſervant of both, is but ill able to execute its office. It was therefore a very kind, as well as a wiſe proviſion, to aſſiſt weak reaſon to draw the proper conſequences

ſequences from the facts as they ſtand in the record; to direct us how to live on Chriſt, the proper food as well as the life of the ſoul; to inform us what exerciſes and ſpiritual employments are beſt adapted to raiſe the new vital powers to their higheſt perfection, and where true pleaſure is to be found. And, in truth, all theſe run into one another: the whole buſineſs of a Chriſtian is, to behold the glory of God as it ſhines in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; there is their life, there alſo lie all the materials of enjoyment; nor is there one ſingle command in the whole extent of the divine law, which is not either a piece of the Chriſtian's happineſs, or ſtands neceſſarily connected with it, either fitting and preparing for it, or guarding againſt ſuch things as might mar and hinder it.

It would anſwer very little purpoſe to enter more minutely into theſe particulars, unleſs one were to give ſomething of a complete view of the ſcripture-directory. Chriſt is the pattern; his example is the great and comprehenſive rule; and the whole duty of a Chriſtian is only a more extended draught of conformity to Chriſt.

It will anſwer our preſent purpoſe better, to review what we have hinted, and give a ſhort abſtract of the effects of the faith of Chriſt, or, which is the ſame thing,

II. THE impreſſions which the true belief of the divine record concerning Chriſt makes upon the Chriſtian, wherein the life of faith lies, which was the ſecond thing I propoſed to illuſtrate. Of theſe impreſſions we ſhall but juſt mention the leading and fundamental ones, whereby proper ſentiments are formed, and the heart balanced into anſwerable affections and paſſions; in which it will be readily acknowledged the right temper of mind conſiſts, and from which will neceſſarily follow a ſuitable way of living and courſe of action.

1. We obſerved as the firſt impreſſion of faith upon the ſoul, a very high eſteem of, and a profound veneration for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And very high the eſteem muſt be, ere it comes any thing near being proportioned to the excellency of his perſon as he is in himſelf, without taking any other views. But as he is more and more diſtinctly perceived

ceived in his public character, where our all, for time and eternity, appears to be in his hand, eſteem will be attended with veneration, that is, the higheſt regard a creature can poſſibly entertain. This, in ignorant minds, often degenerates into that vain ſuperſtition which is ſo viſible in the Popiſh monaſteries, and too much of it nearer home.

2. On further views, and nearer acquaintance with Chriſt, and his way, there appears ſo much lovelineſs and ſweetneſs in his whole conduct, ſuch condeſcenſion and kindneſs, that the heart is inſenſibly pleaſed with him, the great things he had in view, and his manner of conducting every part of his undertaking; and thus, by very natural degrees, is raiſed up to *love*; and in conſequence of that, can find no reſt without the greateſt nearneſs to him that can poſſibly be attained. I need not enter upon any account of the nature and actings of this leading affection: every body knows it commands the whole man, and engages every power in the purſuit of its own views. And hence,

3. It becomes the higheſt pleaſure to the

the Chriſtian, to ſacrifice every thing to the beloved object: all other things are ſlighted, and go for nothing; and whatever appears to be inconſiſtent with, much more if it ſtand in oppoſition to the enjoyment of the perſon whom he loves, becomes the object of his ſevereſt abhorrence. How much are the world miſtaken! They look upon mortification and ſelf-denial, crucifying the fleſh with the luſts and affections, and renouncing the world, as very terrible, and even impracticable things: and no wonder they ſhould; for they love theſe things. But to a Chriſtian, under the influence of faith working by love, theſe of all duties are the moſt agreeable and pleaſing.

4. On further and more confirmed views of Chriſt, the believer is gradually led on to truſt him without reſerve. Love at firſt, though very real, and perhaps very fervent, yet, for many obvious reaſons, is oppreſſed and borne down with doubts and fears; and the more real and fervent love is, the more apt the perſon is to entertain jealouſies. It requires acquaintance and ſome experience to beget confidence. But when perfect love comes

to

to caſt out fear, with all the torment that attends it, Chriſt is truſted with all; the believer is contented to be any thing he is pleaſed to make him; and for a world, nay for ten thouſand worlds, he would not have any ſeparate intereſts from him. And thence,

5. The believer comes to feel his own happineſs; to conclude, that the lines are fallen to him in pleaſant places, and that he has a goodly heritage. His heart was reconciled to God from the time he firſt ſaw him in Chriſt. There he found him in all his fulneſs, and the all-ſufficiency of his power; and now he finds him to be his own, his God, and his Father; and deſpiſes, as dung trodden under foot, all the world can do either for or againſt him. Here he takes up his reſt, and thankfully acquieſces in any ſtation or place that his heavenly Father is pleaſed to allot him either in his houſe or in his world. And,

6. Hence ariſes that aſtoniſhing courage and reſolution the right believer is poſſeſſed of. Conſcious as he is of his dignity, as a man in Chriſt, a child of God, and a choſen inhabitant of the eternal world;

world; conſcious too of the worth and value of the great Captain of ſalvation, and God himſelf in him, with all the power and all the hoſts of heaven on his ſide; he contracts a true greatneſs of ſpirit, quite different from the ſilly pride of the ſons of Adam; he walks in the name of the Lord, and in him he is allowed, and commanded, to boaſt and glory.

What follows would be all pure enjoyment, were it not for that load of fleſh which the new creature in his preſent embryo ſtate is forced to carry about with him, by which he is ſo cloſely connected with a preſent world, kept abſent from his Lord, and conſtantly plagued with the perverſe appetites, and paſſions, and affections, of the old man. For however he is *crucified*, that is, faſtened to the croſs of Chriſt; yet he is not *dead* until the body be laid in the duſt. And though ſin cannot have dominion over the man in Chriſt, yet it can ſtrongly ſolicit, and too often prevails againſt him. And hence in the

7. and laſt place, Faith keeps the Chriſtian in a conſtant ſenſe and feeling of his own nothingneſs and corruption, and a needy

needy dependence on the Spirit and grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his all-ſufficient ſacrifice and interceſſion; on his Spirit and grace to be preſerved from temptation and ſin, and on his blood for pardon and cleanſing. Thus the Apoſtle ſtates the caſe, 1 John ii. 1. "Theſe things "write I unto you, that ye ſin not. And "if any man ſin, we have an advocate "with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righ-"teous: and he is the propitiation for "our ſins." As neither his courage and reſolution, nor any of the grounds of that greatneſs of ſpirit I mentioned, lie in himſelf, the more vigorouſly they are excited, the more is the Spirit and life of Chriſt felt, and the greater his humility and ſelf-denial. And there lies his ſafety.

I ſhall now conclude with two or three obſervations, which may be of ſome uſe for the further clearing this very uſeful and important ſubject.

The firſt relates to the ſeveral accounts that are given of faith, or believing, in the divine writings, both of the Old and New Teſtaments, and the different expreſſions made uſe of concerning it; all of them indeed very ſignificant and pro-

per where they are uſed, but which may eaſily occaſion ſome confuſion in the conceptions of unexperienced readers. From the account we have been giving of it, it will be eaſy to ſee how juſtly faith, or believing, is applied to expreſs the proper regard with which the record and teſtimony of God ought to be received and entertained, and how, from the different views there given us of Chriſt, the faith of Chriſt is likewiſe differently expreſſed. As he is ſent of God, he is to be received, acknowledged, and entertained, as becomes the character he bears, as a Saviour, Redeemer, Prophet, Prieſt, King, and all that is comprehended in the name *Chriſt* or the *Meſſiah*. It is believing, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, with all the conſequential ſentiments and affections which theſe views of him natively raiſe and influence, as we have ſhortly pointed them out; and which give riſe to truſting him, truſting in him, rejoicing, boaſting, glorying in him, with other ſuch expreſſions of confidence and love; which have occaſioned many learned and laborious diſcourſes upon the nature of faith, and not a few miſtakes: for while ſome pitch upon

on one view, and ſome upon another, it is no wonder that the common reader ſhould be left in great confuſion, when things are ſeparated and taken aſunder which God hath ſo very cloſely and inſeparably united.

It is to be further obſerved, that faith in Chriſt is inſeparably connected with faith in God the Father, and in the Holy Spirit. With reſpect to the firſt, our Lord aſſures us, that he that believeth on him, believeth not on him, but on the Father that ſent him. And the Apoſtle Peter tells us, 1 Pet. i. 21. That it is through him that Chriſtians do believe in God. Nor indeed can it be otherwiſe in the nature of the thing. In him God manifeſts himſelf unto us, not only in the beauty and excellency of his adorable fulneſs, but eſpecially in the glory of the riches of his grace, the only view that could ever reſtore a convicted rebel to any confidence in his juſtly offended ſovereign. The faith of Chriſt leads as neceſſarily to faith in the Holy Spirit, who dwells in him without meaſure, and which accordingly he communicates unto every Chriſtian; and thus, faith terminates equally on the

whole adorable Trinity, and raiſes the heart into ſuitable ſentiments and affections.

And hence it neceſſarily follows, that all thoſe ſentiments and affections commonly and very properly called *the graces* or *free gifts of the Spirit*; ſuch as thoſe which we find the Apoſtle recommending, Gal. v. 22. 23. as fruits of the Spirit, are no other than the proper impreſſions which the faith of Chriſt makes upon the heart, and which it cannot miſs to do where-ever it is true and real. And this gives us a further view of the ſecurity that is provided for the Chriſtian againſt his continuance in ſin, viz. That as, by the Chriſtian's union with Chriſt, he is made a partaker of his Spirit; ſo the Spirit dwelling in him by faith, forms his heart at once into the belief of, and conformity and ſuitableneſs unto the divine record. And this gives a further view of the thoughtleſs perverſeneſs of thoſe who reproach the goſpel of Chriſt, as giving encouragement to ſin; which they would ſee to be abſolutely impoſſible, if they knew what the Chriſtian faith and the grace of the goſpel really are.

Here

Here likewiſe we may obſerve the diſtinguiſhing characters of the Chriſtian life, manifeſting and diſcovering themſelves in the exerciſes and actings of it. As it is founded in the Spirit and life of Chriſt, and is really, and in ſtrict propriety, a different kind and ſpecies of life from that which the children of Adam live; ſo it manifeſteth itſelf, by "looking, not at the things which are ſeen, "which are temporal, but at thoſe things "which are not ſeen, and are eternal." Believers ſet their affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; accordingly "they ſeek thoſe things "which are above, where Chriſt is exalted "at the Father's right hand." And, to ſay all in one word, "their *converſation* is "in heaven." The word is very comprehenſive and proper; it ſignifies the life or way of living of a citizen, where all one's intereſts and all his buſineſs lies. They are citizens of heaven; their inheritance, their treaſure, and of courſe their heart, is there; and there all their buſineſs lies that is worth looking after. They are but pilgrims and ſtrangers on this earth, and have nothing but a preſent ſubſiſtence

ſubſiſtence to look for here. This is what gives them the advantage they have above others, the victory by which they overcome the world; a victory which none of the wiſe moraliſts, ſo much admired by men, who knew not the nature and worth of Chriſtianity, could ever attain to. The Apoſtle makes the challenge, "Who is he that overcometh the world, "but he that believeth that Jeſus is the "Son of God?" And there never has, nor ever will be, a man found able to anſwer it.

Here then we have a ſhort, but a moſt complete and perfect Chriſtian directory. He that has the faith of Chriſt, has all; he that wants it, has nothing. Well might our Lord ſay, that "this is the work of "God, that ye believe on him whom he "hath ſent." It ſecures the heart for God through Jeſus Chriſt; and that ſecures the whole man, all his thoughts, all his words and actions; forming the whole of his conduct of life upon a perfect, a moſt infallible pattern. The Apoſtle Paul gives the ſame account of the Chriſtian's buſineſs: "Neither circumci-"ſion availeth any thing, nor uncircum-

"ciſion;

" ciſion; but faith which worketh by " love."

This then is the direction every Chriſtian muſt mind, if ever he would thrive. Look well to your faith: as that is weak or ſtrong, languiſhing or lively, ſuch will the whole Chriſtian frame be. And therefore,

1. Beware of ſtarving your faith, by neglecting to lay in proper proviſion. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. That is the only ſuſtenance for faith; and what the word holds forth and conveys through faith into the heart, viz. the grace of God in Chriſt, is the only ſupport of the ſoul. " Wherefore, as new born babes, deſire " the ſincere milk of the word, that ye " may grow thereby." " And let the " word of Chriſt dwell in you richly, in " all knowledge and ſpiritual underſtand- " ing." It is the Spirit of Chriſt indeed which alone can kindle and maintain this divine flame; but it is the Chriſtian's buſineſs to lay the feuel ready.

2. Beware of poiſoning your faith. And this may be done either by perverſe principles or practices. Both commonly go together,

together, and mutually contribute ſupport to each other. The milk of the word muſt be ſincere, or without mixture, in order to nouriſhment; for every foreign mixture gives it a poiſonous quality: and as without Chriſt we can do nothing; ſo, in the ſame degree that any thing elſe is truſted to, ſo far our ſtrength is loſt.

3. Beware of ſpoiling your faith, by ſuffering it to lie idle. Exerciſe is as neceſſary in the ſpiritual life, as in the natural. By faith the Chriſtian lives, and of courſe he only lives ſo far as faith is kept in conſtant exerciſe. I do not like a diſtinction which is too often uſed, between faith in the habit, and faith in exerciſe. Juſt ſo much activity and exerciſe as there is, ſo much is there of faith; and whenever it ceaſes to act, the Chriſtian ceaſes to live. The ſeeds of life may be in him; but life lies in living, or in the exerciſe of life. At the ſame time we muſt beware of attempting to live, that is, to exerciſe faith, or any other grace, but by ſtrength derived from the Spirit of life.

DIS-

DISSERTATION IV.

Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.

THus far we have conſidered the Chriſtian life, as the Apoſtle deſcribes it from his own experience and perſonal feeling.

The way of entering into it is, by *being crucified with Chriſt.*

The diſtinguiſhing nature of it conſiſts in Chriſt's *living in the Chriſtian.* And,

The Chriſtian's way of living in the fleſh is, *by the faith of the Son of God.*

And could we keep in this way, all would, all muſt be perfectly well with us. But what we find complained of in the old Iſraelites, Pſal. 95. that they erred in their hearts, and did not know the way of God, continues to be ſo ſtill.

There are three capital errors which men profeſſing, or attempting to be Chriſtians, very naturally run into, which ruin the whole of their ſucceſs, and inſtead of adorning their profeſſion, by ſhewing forth the power and virtue of

our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in a conformity unto him in his death and reſurrection, diſgrace their profeſſion, and bring reproach on that worthy name whereby they are called.

The firſt reſpects the object of their faith, what they are to believe. Theſe things are indeed fairly ſet before us in the record God has made concerning his ever-bleſſed Son; but multitudes cannot bear the pains that are neceſſary, to ſearch the ſcriptures diligently, to ſee what theſe things are. They content themſelves with what they can learn about them occaſionally, or in tranſient glances; and reſting in general confuſed apprehenſions of things they never attain any diſtinct apprehenſions of the ſtate of the ſpiritual world, or the God they pretend to worſhip. And thence "being ignorant of the righteouſneſs of "God, and going about to eſtabliſh their "own righteouſneſs," their faith anſwers no better purpoſe than to ſubject them to greater condemnation; and at the ſame time that they, in ſome meaſure, eſcape the pollutions that are in the world through luſt, they fall into another courſe of rebellion ſtill more fatal, viz. "neglect-

"ing

" ing the great ſalvation, which was firſt
" ſpoken by the Lord, and confirmed unto
" us by them that heard him."

The ſecond error reſpects the grounds and foundations on which faith ſhould ſtand; the revelation which God makes of himſelf by his Spirit in Chriſt Jeſus, powerfully impreſſed on the hearts and ſpirits of men. Many take up with a light credulity, or looſe opinion, founded only in the authority or reaſonings of men: they have ſome confuſed notions, perhaps, of the teſtimony of God; but the evidences he has given of his faithfulneſs, and real concern about us, are not at all attended to. Such ſuperficial conceits can never anſwer the purpoſe of faith, nor bear the ſtreſs which lies upon it in the Chriſtian life.

Theſe two ſeldom go further than an outward form, a ſhadow of Chriſtianity, without any ſubſtance at all. But there is a third error which inſinuates itſelf often into the moſt ſerious, and ſuch as really make religion their buſineſs. They believe the general principles, and the facts there atteſted concerning Chriſt, and ſalvation through him; but ſtop ſhort with-

out any particular application to themſelves. They treat the goſpel as a ſyſtem of ſpeculative truths, of very great moment indeed to ſuch as have any intereſt in them, and of promiſes too exceeding great and precious, and perfectly ſure to ſuch as they belong to. But as they dare not reckon themſelves among that number, nay and reckon it preſumption to do ſo, all is kept at ſuch a diſtance, that they make no impreſſion on the heart, and conſequently have no influence on the life. That they are very happy for whom Chriſt died; that "whoſoever believes "in him, ſhall not periſh, but have ever-"laſting life;" and that "the loving "kindneſs of God is better than life;" all this they readily admit: but until one can ſay with the Apoſtle, *Chriſt loved me, and gave himſelf for me*; that is, until one ſees his own intereſt in Chriſt, and, as the Apoſtle John expreſſes it, "knows and "believes the love that God hath to him;" his faith is defective in a very eſſential point; and the ſpiritual life, if there be any, is at ſo low an ebb, that both the comfort and the fruit of it are loſt.

I had occaſion to touch upon this in the foregoing

foregoing diſcourſe, when ſpeaking of the impreſſions which the faith of Chriſt makes upon the heart, by which one may be enabled to determine a queſtion which has been very warmly diſputed, *Whether aſſurance be of the eſſence of faith?* And diſputed it has been, until faith itſelf ſeems to be diſputed away, and little left among Chriſtians but a faint ſhadow of it, that anſwers no manner of purpoſe, but giving thoſe a name to live, who are really, and to all intents and purpoſes, dead. I have no mind to enter into the intricacies this queſtion has been involved in, by men who have had ſome other purpoſes to anſwer by it, than barely the advancement of religion, and the edification of the body of Chriſt: but as the Apoſtle has given it as his own experience, and joins it ſo cloſely with living by the faith of the Son of God, I do not ſee how any Chriſtian can ſatisfy himſelf without ſomething of the ſame experience. And even thoſe who talk ſo much of ſincerity as the only perfection required in the goſpel, muſt acknowledge, there can be no ſincerity, without not only aiming at perfection, but uſing all the means which have

have any tendency to advance one in the way to it: And I think, it will readily be acknowledged, that juſt ſo much as is wanting of aſſurance, ſo much there will be of doubtfulneſs; and ſo much of doubtfulneſs, ſo much unbelief. The Apoſtle Paul is poſitive, that Abraham could not ſo much as ſtagger at the promiſe but through unbelief, Rom. iv. 20.

What I propoſe, therefore, is only to lay together ſome conſiderations for clearing up the nature of the Chriſtian faith, as it relates to one's perſonal intereſt in the dying love of the Redeemer, ſo as he ſhall be able to diſtinguiſh his faith, as the Apoſtle did, *who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*; or as the Apoſtle John does, "We have known and believed the love "that God hath to us." And then we may conſider how or by what means the ſoul comes to be raiſed up from the utmoſt uncertainty, and ſometimes the brink of deſpair, into this comfortable reflection of faith, "who loved me, and "gave himſelf for me."

I. WE begin with the evidences and aſſurances we have, that it is the very nature

ture and eſſence of faith, to eſtabliſh the heart on the love of Chriſt, and his redemption, particularly applied to ourſelves. ——And here,

1. It is to be conſidered what it is the Chriſtian is called to believe. This is the firſt and moſt natural inquiry, and which ſingly might determine the queſtion. If there is nothing of the love of Chriſt or his redemption, or, which is the ſame thing, the love of God to a periſhing world, held forth to be believed, then indeed this perſuaſion of the Apoſtle's muſt ſtand on ſome other bottom. But, on the other hand, if the Apoſtle John's account of the record or teſtimony of God be true, "That God hath given to us e-"ternal life, and this life is in his Son;" or, which is the ſame thing, That God hath given us his Son, and eternal life in him; the very belief of this will infer all the Apoſtle ſays, That *he hath loved us, and given himſelf for us.*

This is ſo true, that juſt according to the conceptions men form to themſelves of what they call the object of faith, that is, what is to be believed, ſuch will their faith be; and thence ariſes all the numerous

rous differences, ſects, and parties, that are to be found among Chriſtians.

There was a time when it was the received doctrine among all Proteſtants, that the word of God carried in it ſuch divine light, and power, as, under the conduct of the Holy Spirit, approved itſelf unto the hearts and conſciences of men, and made faith of the things there held forth; and this was then thought agreeable unto the experience of all true Chriſtians. And as the ſpecial mercy of God to ſinners in Chriſt, and the love of Chriſt, in giving himſelf a ranſom for them, is the great import of the goſpel; to believe this, was thought to be the very eſſence, and diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic, of true faith.

But in time, when the belief of the ſcriptures came to be founded in what they call rational evidence, and deductions from what is called natural religion, that is, a pretended philoſophical knowledge of God, and men took it into their heads to become Chriſtians as they become philoſophers, or men of learning, there was no ſuch effect felt in their faith; which they reckoned upon as an argument from experience, that there was no

aſſurance

aſſurance belonging to faith, but ſuch as was gathered up by rational evidence, and reflecting on the effects of faith felt in themſelves.

What contributed much to ſupport this laſt concluſion was, the notion of the goſpel which now generally prevails, that it is no more but a conditional conſtitution, or a promiſe and offer of pardon and eternal life upon the terms of a ſinner's believing in Chriſt: "He that be-" lieveth, &c. ſhall be ſaved; and he that " believeth not, ſhall be damned."

This our Lord indeed gives as the final iſſue of the goſpel being preached. When it is ſo, it will either be believed or not; and the event in either caſe will be reſpectively as he hath expreſſed it. But this ſays, that the goſpel, which is to be believed, is a different thing from that which is but the conſequence of it.

The *goſpel*, properly ſpeaking, as that word is uſed in the New Teſtament, is that which the angels call ſo, " the glad " tidings of great joy:" That the Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, or anointed one, was born, and actually exhibited in the perſon of Jeſus. There was then no diſ-

pute about the general character of the Meſſiah. That he was to be a ſaviour, a deliverer, to give life, health, and proſperity, was allowed. The blinded Jews, indeed, ſaw no further than a preſent world. But it was not doubted by any Chriſtian, that it is eternal ſalvation he is the author of. And is not this the very thing the Apoſtle John ſays of the record? "The Son of God is ſent into the "world to give eternal ſalvation." They who believe this, and find that he, with the life that is in him, is freely given to every one who will receive him, muſt directly apply it to themſelves, and believe, if they believe any thing at all, that his redemption, and the life he has to beſtow, are given to them. But,

Let us conſider the ſtate of the goſpel, or what the Chriſtian has to believe, more particularly as it is a teſtimony given by God, and a record made of his conſtitution of grace, and the method he has fixed upon for giving eternal life to the periſhing race of Adam, which we are peremptorily bound to receive and believe, under this moſt rouſing certification, "He "that believeth not, ſhall be *damned*;" and great

great reaſon for it, becauſe "he that be-
"lieveth not, hath made God a liar," in not receiving the teſtimony he has given concerning his Son. Had that record no further intention, than that God had really given to ſome of mankind that life, a general belief would have anſwered it, and no body could have been obliged to more; much leſs could they have incurred ſuch a dreadful imputation, by ſuffering it to paſs by as a thing they were not obliged to know, that they had any particular concern in. But that, we are ſure, is not the caſe. It is ſo given to every man that hears the goſpel, that he muſt either receive it for himſelf, or be found guilty of rejecting it, under all the aggravating circumſtances that attend it. And indeed ſo it is, by what we had occaſion to obſerve of the ſtate of the record. The gift is ſet before men, and they are called, preſſed, and urged by all the motives that can prevail with a reaſonable creature, to believe, and are aſſured they ſhall ſucceed; that "he is faithful who hath promi-
"ſed it," and that it is not poſſible they can be diſappointed. What ſtronger foundation can we deſire to build the

moſt particular application to ourſelves, and the beſt-grounded aſſurance on? Nor is it poſſible for one to avoid it, without making God a liar in one of two reſpects; either that he will not give the life he has ſaid he will give, or that it is not worth having: and, in both caſes, the gift and gracious proviſion is expreſsly rejected.

But, ſay the wiſe men of the world, and they ſay it with great confidence, How can theſe things be ſo? Is it not plain fact, that there are, and always have been, multitudes who have had the goſpel preached to them in the ſame manner it is to thoſe who believe; and yet, by the event, it appears, that they were reprobates; and conſequently, that Chriſt neither loved them, nor gave himſelf for them? and yet, ſay they, theſe are called to believe, and preſſed to it, with the very ſame arguments and motives, and the ſame encouragements, with the elect. Were this then the thing propoſed to be believed, that God giveth unto them eternal life; or that Chriſt loved them, and died for them; they would be bound to believe what is not true; nay more, what cannot be

be true, becauſe "the gifts and calling of "God are without repentance."

To this an anſwer has been often made, That it is indeed not true, that God gives eternal life, and his Son, in whom this life is, to any particular perſon until it be believed, but becomes true whenever it is. This has been thought a very bad ſort of aſſertion; and ſome have been bold enough to beſtow abundance of wit to expoſe it: and yet there is nothing more obviouſly true. God never gave, and never promiſed to give, eternal life, or any of the bleſſings connected with it, to an unbeliever. The gift lies in common, without any determinate application to any one perſon more than another, juſt as Chriſt himſelf, in whom this life lies, is ſet forth as a common ſaviour. And what we call believing, or faith, is the eſtabliſhed method, the mean which God has ordained for applying it. The proclamation is general, "Whoſoever will, "let him come and take;" and coming and taking are the application of the general gift. And theſe are but other words for believing; for in no other way can we "come and take the waters of life freely."

But

But here it muſt be remembered, that however it is by this application of faith that we are received, yet it is ſtill through grace, and not according to any works of righteouſneſs done by us. That very faith which makes the application is the gift of God, wrought by the Spirit of Chriſt in the heart and ſpirit of the believer, and is no more than the firſt vital act of the new creature; ſuch as all the efforts of free will, with all the aſſiſtances that can be called in by any of the children of Adam, could never effect. This makes a perfect conſiſtency in the method of grace: God gives his Son, and life in him: he really gives or imparts life by his Spirit, and, at that very time, not ſooner, the man believes he gives it; and, when he does ſo, muſt believe, that Chriſt has "loved him, and given himſelf for "him;" which was indeed true before, but he could not know it ſooner.

But poſſibly it may be ſaid, This accounts very well for the believer, but how can thoſe who are finally reprobate, believe what neither is, nor will be true? But may we not ſay again, What hinders it from being true but unbelief? that is,

is, they will not receive it as God gives it: and whoſe fault is that? But it will be ſaid, If faith was the native effect of free will, it would indeed be the man's fault: but it is the gift of God; and how can the man be damned for God's withholding his gift? The proper anſwer to ſo bold a charge would be what the Apoſtle gives in a caſe near of kin to this, "Who art thou, O man, who replieſt a-"gainſt God?" The ſtrength of the anſwer lies in the queſtion, "Who art "thou, O man?" and one may ſay, with great aſſurance, that no man that knows himſelf, will ever talk in that manner. He will feel in himſelf, his conſcience will tell him, that he has treated the aſtoniſhing grace of God, manifeſted in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, in ſuch an unworthy manner, that it is perfectly conſiſtent with the moſt boundleſs riches of grace to ſhut him out for ever from any part or ſhare in it, and that nothing but ſovereign grace can prevent his eternal deſtruction. And this conviction will be yet ſtronger, if he knows indeed the ſtate and temper of his own heart, what it is that moves him to make ſuch an objection,

jection, as it argues a heart not at all reconciled to the grace of God, and his way of beſtowing eternal life in the new creation. He cannot think of living by grace, but will be at doing ſomething to make the purchaſe. He will not receive it on God's terms, and ſo ſtand altogether indebted to Chriſt; which is as much as to ſay, that he will not have it at all. The man that is content to be nothing, to deny himſelf, and follow Chriſt, will find the way open to a throne of grace, where he can never be at a loſs for either mercy or grace. And he that will not go there to have it, complains injuriouſly, and without any cauſe, if he goes without it.

I have been, I know not how, drawn in to ſpeak ſo much on this, and indeed it is the foundation of all we have to add on this ſubject. But more particularly,

2. Let us conſider how every man that is called to believe, is called to believe in Chriſt; and in whatever view we conſider the faith of Chriſt, it will very naturally, and even neceſſarily, land us where it did the Apoſtle, viz. in the particular application of his redeeming love to ourſelves.

And

And as this is the great deſign of the goſpel, to ſet forth Chriſt, it muſt be the more particularly conſidered. And there are three queſtions which will very naturally occur to any one who thinks ſeriouſly on this ſubject.—Who he is, or what we are to believe about him?—What we are to believe in him for?—and, What we do when we believe in him?—I have no mind to repeat what I have ſaid on theſe points; and therefore, taking the record as it ſtands, we have only the iſſue it runs into to conſider.

And ſurely it is hard to conceive how a creature, in our circumſtances, can look with indifference on the aſtoniſhing diſcovery of divine love to mankind in the very conſtitution of the perſon of Chriſt; God uniting himſelf to man, condeſcending to dwell with men upon the earth, and to ſhow himſelf the ſpring and fountain of eternal life to them. When we look further, and conſider how he died, and roſe again, according to the ſcriptures; how he is ſet forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, and has entered into heaven, there to appear in the preſence of God for us; can ſuch a won-

derful diſplay of love be believed without affecting the heart in the moſt powerful manner?

But the call, to believe in Chriſt, or to believe in his name, carries our views further, viz. to what we believe in him for, or what we are taught to expect and look for from him. And indeed they are no trifles we are directed to expect, nor can any ſuch be expected from ſuch a hand. When God gives, he gives like himſelf; and when God condeſcends to appear like one of us, and takes part with the children of Adam, it raiſes expectation to the higheſt. Indeed it is a divine work; the pardon of by-paſt offences is but an introduction to it. It is no leſs than a new creation; the forming, out of the ruins of Adam's race, and Adam's world, "a new heaven, and a new "earth, wherein dwells righteouſneſs;" and a ſet of inhabitants fitted for ſuch a world, to be heirs of eternal life, to be made the ſons of God, formed after his image, the ſtandard of perfection; and all this by Jeſus Chriſt. And is it poſſible to believe on him for ſuch things as theſe, without

without applying the general call to ourſelves in particular? It cannot be. For,

When we believe in Jeſus, or in his name, for theſe things, is it not for ourſelves we believe? Can we do it without expecting and looking for them, without believing he will do what he was given, what he was ſent, to do; what he came into the world, took our fleſh upon him, lived and died to open a way for; what he roſe from the dead, and has all power given him, and, to ſay all in one word, what he has promiſed and bound himſelf to do, by his own unchangeable faithfulneſs? Can we believe in him without truſting him for theſe things, and looking for them? and can we do that, without believing, and thankfully acknowledging, that "he hath loved us, and given "himſelf for us?"

This might be made yet more plain, by inſtancing in the particular benefits of pardon and juſtification, the adoption of children, the new birth, and new nature, with all the conſequences of them; where it would appear how impoſſible it is to believe, any of theſe can be beſtowed, much leſs to expect them through Chriſt,

as they muſt do who believe in his name, without taking in the only foundation on which they can ſtand, the particular love of Chriſt in giving himſelf for us: So that however almoſt every thing about him, the facts by which he is known even by the beſt Chriſtians, may be believed after a ſort, that is, in ſuch a looſe ſpeculative way, as we commonly do things we have no concern in; yet, in the nature of the thing, it is evident, that we cannot believe in him, that is, truſt him, or expect any thing from him, but by a particular application of the general declarations, calls, promiſes, and encouragements, laid in common in the goſpel, to ourſelves, and our own particular circumſtances, and the condition we are in. And this leads us,

3. To conſider the diſtinguiſhing character of the Chriſtian faith, viz. that it is "a "believing with the heart." So we find it almoſt every where diſtinguiſhed from the looſe general dead faith of temporary and cuſtomary profeſſors. So the Apoſtle, Rom. x. 10. lays it down as an unconteſted principle, That "with the heart man "believeth unto righteouſneſs." And, in

in the ſame manner, Philip lays it before the eunuch, Acts viii. 27. as the only caſe in which it was lawful to baptize him: "If thou believeſt with all thy heart." And if we know what the heart is in ſcripture-language, and that is the ſame with the language of men, we will ſee it muſt of neceſſity be ſo.

The heart is the moſt inward, and therefore the moſt hidden and reſerved part of the man. And thence it has become the common expreſſion of ſincerity, that what we do with all our heart, we agree to without any ſecret reſerve, or contrary inclination, which often creates an inward reluctancy to the thing, which yet, on weightier conſiderations, we ſee proper to go into, and which we find frequently neceſſary for avoiding greater evils.

Every body will acknowledge the neceſſity of the utmoſt ſincerity in the buſineſs of believing, as "all things are naked "and open to him with whom we have to "do." But this cannot be until the inward ſentiment, which is eſpecially deſigned by the heart, is thoroughly formed upon the truth as it is in Jeſus: That, upon

a fair and full view of things as they are ſtated in the conſtitution of grace, we are perfectly pleaſed with the whole, and every part of it; and thereby effectually determined to renounce all relations, intereſts, proſpects, and projects, which are any how inconſiſtent therewith. This is ſo plain a caſe, that no body will pretend to diſpute the general truth. But when the particulars come to be conſidered as our Lord has ſtated them, "to de-"ny ourſelves, take up our croſs, and "follow him; to hate father and mo-"ther," &c. the neareſt and moſt endearing relations, and even our own lives, when they come, as they often do, into competition with him; the inſincerity of our hearts betrays itſelf, and our ſecret ſentiments ſhow themſelves in very earneſt efforts to explain away the fixed rules of the goſpel, or at leaſt to bring them ſo low, as to admit the reſerve we have perhaps undeſignedly and ignorantly made.

The heart is likewiſe the ſeat of all our affections and paſſions; theſe command the whole man, and are the immediate ſprings of all our actions good and bad;

as

as they either are, or neceſſarily produce, what we call the will; that is, thoſe inclinations or averſions which we expreſs when we ſay, We *will*, or *will not*, and upon which all our actions, and the whole conduct of life, depends. While theſe are not balanced by proper and well-founded ſentiment, every external impreſſion will create its correſpondent affection and paſſion, and the man will be exactly ſuch as the Apoſtle deſcribes him, a ſlave to divers luſts and pleaſures, Tit. iii. 3. Thus it is our bleſſed Lord, who never miſtook any thing, tells us, "A good man, out of the good treaſure "of his heart, brings forth good things; "and an evil man, out of the evil trea-"ſure of his heart, brings forth evil "things."

And hence it is eaſy to ſee, that as, in other matters, nothing can touch the heart without ſuch a particular application as makes one ſenſibly feel his intereſt and concern in it, ſo it muſt be likewiſe in the buſineſs of believing in Chriſt. Job ſpeaks very feelingly of the vaſt odds there is between a diſtant report of God, and being ſenſible, as he was then made, of his preſence,

ſence, and how nearly he was concerned in him. The caſe is the ſame with Chriſt, now that he is received up into glory. A general report of him is left behind, as of a very extraordinary perſon who once lived in this world: but until one feels he is one with whom he now hath, and muſt hereafter have to do; however we may be in love with his character, as we are with other great men recorded in hiſtory, the heart neither is, nor can be, affected, ſo as to have all our hopes and fears for time and eternity centered in him. This is the buſineſs of faith; and until it has brought the heart to acquieſce and reſt in him, none can ſay they have believed in him.

And this leads to conſider Chriſt as he is ſet forth unto faith, *as the giver of reſt*. In this character he invites the weary and heavy leaden to come to him, Matth. xi. 28. Nay he himſelf is the very *reſt* of the ſoul, the reſt that remains for the people of God. After the firſt creation-reſt was broken by ſin, and the typical Canaan-reſt at an end, God *reſted* in Chriſt; in him he was perfectly pleaſed; and accordingly they who believe in Chriſt, are ſaid to enter into God's reſt,

reſt, Heb. iv. 3. But how can that be, until their hearts are formed into ſuch juſt and well-founded ſentiments of him, as makes them acquieſce entirely in him, and there loſe all thoſe anxietes and cares which diſtreſſed and diſtracted them? And how can this be, ſo long as they are in doubt, whether they have any intereſt in him? and whenever they have, then they can ſay with the Apoſtle, that Chriſt "loved them, "and gave himſelf for them." And this leads

4. To conſider faith as it has it in its nature to produce love, and to produce it in the ſame degree, and by the ſame ſteps, that itſelf riſes towards perfection. By Chriſt we believe in God; and accordingly faith preſents Chriſt as the neareſt and immediate object of love. But his amiableneſs cannot be ſet in a juſt light, until "God is viewed in him reconciling "the world to himſelf, not imputing "their treſpaſſes unto them;" and thus love, juſt as faith was, is carried through Chriſt unto the Father. He and the Father are ſo *one*, that they can neither be ſeen nor loved ſeparately. In Chriſt's re-

lation to, and union with, the Father, his excellency and glory lies; and in thoſe views of grace which are given us in Chriſt, are laid the foundation of all our love to him.

The all-ſufficient God is indeed without diſpute infinitely amiable and lovely in himſelf; and muſt accordingly, one ſhould think, be eſteemed and loved by every creature who is capable of perceiving his glory: and yet it is not ſo in fact. The devils, we know, entertain an implacable enmity againſt him, and vent it on all occaſions ſo far as lies in their power: and the reaſon of it is not far to ſeek; they know he is their irreconcileable enemy; they have no mercy to look for, nothing to expect from his hand but utter deſtruction. This turns their averſion into deſperate rage. And the ſame would have been the ſtate of man, had there been no revelation of grace. We ſee the beginnings of it in Adam: when ſin had got in and ſettled in his conſcience, he tries to hide himſelf from the preſence of that God whom he had ſo often entertained as his friend. And had he been ſuffered to go on, a total eſtrange-

ment

ment would very quickly have followed; his evil conſcience would have painted his creator as an enemy; that would have been followed with blaſphemous wiſhes, that he might be kept out of his hands, that either God's power were leſs or his own greater. "Skin for ſkin; all "that a man hath will he give for his "life," was one true ſentence uttered by the father of lies.

His poſterity are not in a ſituation quite ſo bad: the firſt of them that was born found, that God had *revealed* himſelf a God of grace and mercy; and, in ſpite of all the corruption and ignorance that has overwhelmed the world, this perſuaſion has kept its room, more or leſs, among all nations. Nor is it to be wondered at; it keeps hope alive; nay it has been improved in all ages to flatter the vanity of mankind: They have thought it a diſcovery made by themſelves, a piece of natural knowledge; and ſoothing their vanity with the proſpect of recommending themſelves by one means or another to the favour of God, many means have been tried, to very little, or rather to no purpoſe at all: They continue ſtill eſtranged from God, abſolutely in the dark, cut off from

all correſpondence with him: and the more they know of him and of themſelves, the leſs their confidence; becauſe their hearts ſmite them, and their conſciences dictate what they deſerve. They cannot bear the thoughts of ſuch a God as he really is; and every one tries to mould him into ſuch a form as ſuits his circumſtances beſt: The ſureſt evidence can be given of their perfect hatred of him, as he really is in himſelf.

Thus deeply inlaid, in the preſent human conſtitution, are the ſeeds of enmity againſt their creator, the great ſovereign of heaven and earth: and theſe, the Apoſtle aſſures us, will continue until their "hearts be ſprinkled from an evil conſci-"ence;" which they cannot be, "till the "blood of Jeſus, who, through the eternal "Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot unto "God, purge the conſcience from dead "works," by giving them good aſſurance of pardon, and ſuch a ſight of God as perfectly ſuits their circumſtances. The greatneſs and majeſty ariſing from the holineſs of the divine nature, that is boundleſs perfection united, overwhelms the ſoul of a ſinner, raiſes admiration, and a ſort of

of eſteem, veneration, and fear; but ſuch as drives the ſoul into deſpair, that is, carries him further and further from God, until he ſees him as he appears in Chriſt Jeſus, juſt ſuch a God as the guilty ſinner has occaſion for; which abates nothing of his eſteem and veneration, but, at the ſame time, makes him appear not only worthy of his love, but touches the heart in the moſt ſenſible and affecting manner, and diſſolves it into love.

But what need we ſtand reaſoning a point which the beloved diſciple, who had the beſt reaſon ever man had to underſtand it, has very expreſsly determined? "We love him, becauſe he loved "us firſt," 1 John iv. 19. And that none might entertain ſuch a perverſe imagination, that God loves us, becauſe we love him, he aſſures us, verſ. 10. it is not ſo: "Not that we loved him, but "that he loved us;" and gave this moſt infallible token of it, "that he gave his "own beloved Son a propitiation for our "ſins:" and verſ. 16. he lays this down as the foundation of our loving God, "that "we have known and believed the love "that God hath to us."

And

And now, as nothing can root out theſe jealouſies and evil ſurmiſings, theſe ſeeds of enmity againſt God, but good aſſurance, that he is not the enemy we take him for, nor any thing ſubdue and recover the ſtraying heart of man into the love of God but aſſurance of his love; and as this cannot be had, but by the particular application of faith we are ſpeaking of, one of two things muſt follow; either that all true faith carries in it ſuch a particular application of Chriſt, the great evidence, token, and pledge, of the love of God to us; or, what no Chriſtian can admit of, that there may be true faith, where yet there is no love, either to God or his Chriſt.

5. We may gather yet further evidence of the truth we are upon from the inſeparable connection there is between true faith, and confidence in God; that confidence to which every true Chriſtian is moſt certainly raiſed up, according to the meaſure of his faith, to rejoice, or, as the original word properly imports, to boaſt, and glory in God, through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as one is wont to do in a ſure and tried friend, who, he certainly knows,

knows, will not diſappoint or make him aſhamed of his confidence.

This is ſo near of kin to faith itſelf, that when it is narrowly looked into, it will be found the very ſame thing, which is otherwiſe called faith in God, or ſo inſeparably connected with it, that, where this is wanting, it is impoſſible to conceive, even of the loweſt and moſt unqueſtionable actings of faith. Believing, for inſtance, that God really is ſuch a being as he is repreſented to us in Chriſt Jeſus, ſo aſtoniſhingly good and gracious, as to give ſuch an unſpeakable happineſs as eternal life, and in ſuch a manner too, by his own Son and Spirit abiding and dwelling in us; it is impoſſible, I ſay, to conceive even of this, without forming the heart, at the ſame time, into the moſt ardent love of, and higheſt confidence; which is no more than a firm truſt and dependence on him: A confidence which we make no ſcruple to found on the promiſes of a weak man, when we believe him honeſt, and the thing in his power, upon infinitely lower evidence: "He that ſpared not his own Son, but "gave him up unto the death for us all,

"how

" how ſhall he not with him alſo freely " give us all things?"

But be that as it will, the Chriſtian faith muſt raiſe the ſoul to ſuch a confidence in God, becauſe it is a duty the moſt earneſtly injoined and preſſed, and moſt frequently repeated of any in the whole Bible, both in the Old and New Teſtament, which we need not ſtand to repeat, and which we find laid as the foundation of all that Chriſtian courage and reſolution which we find ſo many inſtances of in both; and ſo neceſſary, that, without it, it would be ſimply impoſſible for the Chriſtian to bear up, under the manifold tribulations, temptations, and oppoſition, from the devil, the world, and the fleſh, which our Lord has warned his diſciples to lay their account with. And what have they to ſupport and bear them up againſt all theſe? Why, truly, nothing but this, " Greater is he that is " with them, than all that are againſt " them." Take away their confidence in God, through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, their courage is gone, their heart fails them, and they become weak and feeble like other men. And no wonder; for it

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is in the Lord only, and in the power of his might, they are ſtrong: of themſelves they can do nothing. Nay it is in this weakneſs that the Apoſtle aſſures us their ſtrength lies: "When I am weak, then am I ſtrong:" and therefore he chuſes to glory in nothing but his infirmities and weakneſſes.

But how ſhall faith be raiſed to ſuch a confidence in him, and ſuch a firmneſs and ſtrength of mind? And the firmneſs of believers, both in Old and New Teſtament times, has been the aſtoniſhment and admiration of the world. See Heb. xi. throughout, and compare with theſe Old-Teſtament worthies ſuch accounts as we have of the firmneſs and conſtancy of the Chriſtian martyrs. The Apoſtles rejoiced, that they were counted worthy to ſuffer for the name of Jeſus. Paul gives us the myſtery of their conſtancy: "We both la-"bour, and ſuffer perſecution," ſaid he, "becauſe we truſt in the living God." But will ſuch a poor looſe general faith, ſuch as ſome contend for, and content themſelves with, have this effect; a belief or perſuaſion that Chriſt died for mankind in general, or ſome particular

elect men, and that God ſo loved the world, that he gave his Son thus to die for them, while numberleſs numbers are left, notwithſtanding, to periſh eternally? No certainly: Nothing can raiſe our confidence in God, and our perſonal courage and reſolution, but the application of this ſalvation, and the love from which it proceeded, to ourſelves, in the moſt diſtinct and particular manner. But,

6. This is the only way wherein we can give God and his Chriſt the glory that is due unto his name. No body will make any doubt about this being the duty of every Chriſtian, and a very neceſſary one. It is the great deſign of faith to do ſo, and exactly fitted for the purpoſe it is. It is indeed no more but a belief and acknowledgement, that God is what he has declared and manifeſted himſelf to be: That he has done, and will do, what he has really done, and promiſed to do. And, ſurely, what does not that, does not deſerve the name of faith.

The firſt ſtep faith takes, is, to give him the glory of his faithfulneſs, by receiving the record he has made concerning himſelf and his Son Jeſus Chriſt. The Bible, from

from the beginning to the end of it, is properly a record: it is the hiſtory of God, his works in general, and particularly of his ways with the children of men; and by what he has done, the facts there recorded, he manifeſts himſelf to us; by this plain ſimple way he teacheth us what we are to think, and how we are to conceive of him. He reaſons indeed upon the facts, and thereby teaches us what uſe we are to make of them; but the great points of faith are the facts themſelves. And the man that either denies any of the facts, or calls in doubt the juſtneſs of the concluſions drawn from them, whether directly, or by explaining them away, as many of late have done, makes God a liar as really as they who do not receive the record at all; and do it much more impudently than they, while they allow it to be the record of God, and yet preſume to call ſome parts of it in queſtion: for, ſurely, it is leſs diſhonourable to the great author, to ſay, he made not the record; than, after that is admitted, to ſay, that it is ſo imperfect and erroneous, that it needs to be rectified by human ſkill.

There we have God ſet before us as the author of the firſt creation, where indeed all our knowledge of him is founded. But we are given likewiſe to underſtand, That this world, with all that belongs to it, is but a preparation for, and introduction to, another, and every way a better one: That Jeſus Chriſt is at the head of it, and his buſineſs, at preſent, is to prepare inhabitants for it, from among the poor periſhing ſons of Adam: That the way he manages is by publiſhing his great deſign; bringing life and immortality to light, as he has done in the goſpel; calling, preſſing, and aſſuring, in the ſtrongeſt manner, that no weakneſs, worthleſſneſs, wickedneſs, or any diſqualification whatever, ſhall be any hinderance: All theſe he takes upon himſelf; and all that is left to them is, to determine, whether they will content themſelves with the wretched ſhadow of life they have, or renounce and give it up now, as they muſt very ſoon do whether they will or not, and reſt themſelves on his creating power for all, and live purely by grace. And if, after all, they find they cannot determine themſelves, and cannot

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part with a preſent world; even that he has taken upon himſelf to ſupply, and wants no more but that they will conſent to be healed and helped; and when they cannot do ſo much as that, he has taken it upon himſelf to make them willing; and really does ſo, in all that receive and believe in his name.

This, it is evident, is all home work, the cloſeſt application that can be unto the ſoul. Nothing like the remote looſe meaſures of moral government, but the immediate application of creating power to every particular Chriſtian who is really brought to believe in Chriſt And he has not the glory given him that is due to his name, until all theſe are acknowledged; and who can have any reaſon to imagine he is a believer, who doth not acknowledge them? Every believer muſt be qualified to join the Chriſtian worſhip; and the Apoſtle gives us the ſum of it, Rev. i. 5. "To him that loved us, and waſhed "us from our ſins in his own blood, and "made us kings and prieſts unto God," &c. And, ſurely, until he is thus acknowledged, he has not the glory given him that is due unto his name: and if he

he is not thus acknowledged, the riches of the glory of his grace, the glory of God ſhining in the face of Jeſus, is not ſeen and acknowledged; nor can the believer join in theſe forms of aſcribing glory, the glory of his name, to him, "Bleſſed be the "God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," &c. Nay, without it, one cannot ſo much as call Jeſus Lord, without either ambiguity or hypocriſy.

7. There can be no ſuch thing as communion with God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, on any other foundation, but ſuch a particular application of the declarations, calls, and encouragements, of the goſpel, as leads to the dutiful acknowledgements expreſſed by the Apoſtle, *Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* There may indeed be a communication of ſpiritual life, and even of ſpiritual gifts and powers; theſe are neceſſary to qualify for communion: but communion itſelf, which lies in mutual friendſhip, in love, and the duties and offices of friendſhip, in giving and receiving the teſtimonies, tokens, and evidences of love, is what I here ſpeak of; and in theſe, it is evident, the Chriſtian

Chriſtian life is in a manner wholly employed.

The firſt view then, and that which founds all the reſt of the Chriſtian's fellowſhip with the Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, lies in giving and receiving; giving on God's part, and receiving on ours. And, poor, and miſerable, and wretched, and blind, and naked, as we are, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, we have nothing but what we receive; life, and light, and pardon, and ſpiritual powers, and proviſion of every kind, muſt all come from the hand of the kind Redeemer. Life indeed, and the powers belonging to it, muſt be wrought in us without any concurrence of ours. But they are given to put us into a capacity of perceiving and feeling the worth of the gift, and all the ſubſequent evidences of love and friendſhip. And in receiving theſe with dutiful acknowledgements, and returns of gratitude, and love, lies the Chriſtian's part: and how this can be done, while he continues inſenſible, or even doubtful, whether he has received them or not, who can ſay?

The other part of our communion, which

which ariſes naturally from this, conſiſts in acts of adoration, worſhip, and addreſs, to him, as occaſions require, in thankſgivings and acknowledgements, prayers and ſupplications, &c. as tokens of our love to him, and dependence on him, for his gracious returns of acceptance and relief. I need not ſay, how neceſſary it is, that all theſe ſhould proceed from the heart: if it is any worſhip at all, it is but an expreſſion of that love and thankfulneſs to God, and that dutiful confidence in him, and dependence on him, for all things which we ſpoke of already; and which can, by no means, be managed without that confidence of faith we are ſpeaking of, that boldneſs with which the Chriſtian is directed to come to a throne of grace, and to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus; and which the Apoſtle directs to be done with full aſſurance of faith, as thoſe certainly will, who have their hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, Heb. iv. 16. x. 19. *& ſeqq.*

There is one circumſtance, of prayer particularly, which, by itſelf, determines the point, viz. that we are directed to addreſs God as our *Father*. So our Lord taught

taught his diſciples in that form which he gave them: and it is founded in the ſtate they are exalted to; being no more ſervants, but ſons; and the ſpirit of ſons, which all of them receive, exerting, and enabling them to cry, Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15. This is oppoſed to the ſpirit of bondage, which has no more hold of them, now that they are made free by the Son, and brought into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. By which it appears, with full evidence, that we cannot ſo much as pray according to the will of God, without this faith in Chriſt, which acknowledges his dying love to us.

8. We might mention here, that "joy "in believing," which the Apoſtle wiſhes to the Romans; and which Peter ſpeaks of as a neceſſary fruit and effect of believing, 1 Pet. i. 8. The importance of this, in the ſpiritual life, is acknowledged by all, it is the very ſtrength of the ſoul, Neh. viii. 10. We might likewiſe take notice of that great effect we find the Apoſtle attributing to faith, Act. xv. 9. "purifying the heart," and the whole buſineſs of holineſs and ſanctification.

Theſe two have ſuch a neceſſary connection with, and mutual dependence on, each other, that they might be very properly conſidered together; and it would be eaſy to ſhew how impoſſible it is to make any thing of either of them, without the particular application of faith we are ſpeaking of. And it is ſadly verified in the experience of all who are capable of obſerving, what a dead lifeleſs thing Chriſtianity is become, even among the ſerious profeſſors of it, ſince mens conſciences were ſoothed with what they call marks of grace, and thence came to be perſuaded they might do well enough without the aſſurance of their intereſt in Chriſt. But having ſpoken already of the foundations both of holineſs and comfort, in that peace, and love, and confidence in God, which they are but the fruits of, I will not ſtand any further on them here. And therefore,

Laſtly, I conclude with obſerving, that this particular application of Chriſt's dying love is the only thing that can diſtinguiſh our faith from the faith of hypocrites, nay and that of the devils themſelves. It might be thought odd to compare

compare the faith of Chriſtians to that of devils; but the Apoſtle James has taught us to do ſo in one comprehenſive branch of it, James ii. 19. and makes no doubt even to prefer the faith of devils, as it is attended with ſuch a particular application as their circumſtances would admit; "they believe and tremble." And when we have examined the whole complex ſyſtem of divine truth in all the parts of it, there will not be found one ſingle point which they do not know more perfectly, and believe more firmly, than the moſt orthodox Chriſtian on earth: but they have no intereſt in theſe things, unleſs it be to make them more miſerable. Men, Chriſtians eſpecially, have the record of all theſe things made for their benefit: but if they will not take the advantage of them, by applying them to themſelves, they will be more guilty than the devils; and there is no room to doubt of their miſery being aggravated in exact proportion to the privileges they have had, and neglected or refuſed to make the proper advantage of.

I once thought to have illuſtrated this

point further, by ſhowing how an awakened ſelf-condemned ſinner, upon the brink of deſpair, is, under the direction of the Spirit of life, raiſed up to the happy ſtate we ſpeak of, viz. confidence in God through Jeſus Chriſt, and the moſt endearing and comfortable reflections on his almighty love. But, conſidering how very various the ways of the Spirit are in theſe caſes, that no one preciſe method of procedure can be laid down which may anſwer the experiences of every true believer; and that, in the account we gave of the divine record in the foregoing diſcourſe, and the impreſſions which the belief of it makes upon the heart, we have already ſaid as much as is neceſſary on that head; any further enlargement in this place would be ſuperfluous.

IT may, perhaps, rather be of more uſe to inquire, how it has come to paſs, that this particular application of goſpel-grace, the love of Chriſt, and the Father in him, comes to be ſo much overlooked by the generality of Chriſtians among us.

We have already given ſome general hints about it; we ſhall here conſider it ſomewhat more particularly. And this

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is the more neceſſary, becauſe the great objection which lies againſt this particular application, and, in effect, the ſole foundation of the oppoſite opinion, is, that this is contrary to the common experience of Chriſtians. But when we pretend to build any thing upon the experience of Chriſtians, we had need to know well who and what ſort of Chriſtians they are. Reaſoning from experience in theſe caſes, is like judging by precedent; both may happen to be againſt law. The approved examples we have recorded in ſcripture we may ſafely follow, becauſe they are illuſtrations of the rule: but no after ages have any ſuch privilege. The Apoſtle Paul himſelf adviſes Chriſtians to be followers even of him, ſo far only as he was a follower of Chriſt. And indeed it generally falls out, that, when people make precedents and example the rule, and forſake the law and rule they ſhould judge by, they have ſome other purpoſes in view than truth and juſtice. Let us conſider them a little. And,

1. It is certain, there are great numbers of men who call themſelves Chriſtians, who are ſo groſsly ignorant of the go-

ſpel,

ſpel, and eſpecially of the exerciſes and actings of faith in Chriſt, and at the ſame time ſo regardleſs of all that belongs to Chriſtianity in their practice, that they differ nothing from Heathens, except that they happened to be baptized when infants, and exceed them in wickedneſs. Multitudes of theſe are ſo groſsly profane, that their example or experiences are minded by no body, unleſs it be to avoid them, and beware of treading in their ſteps. Others are more ſober, while yet no body takes them for ſerious Chriſtians. And how ſhall we know where to ſtop? There is a thing called *charity*, a term which has got into our tranſlation of the Bible, where the original word ſignifies *Chriſtian love*, which indeed covers a multitude of faults. By the help of this blinding perſpective, we may imagine we find multitudes of good Chriſtians who are hardly good enough to paſs for hypocrites or pretenders to Chriſtianity. Mens hearts we cannot ſee; a form of godlineſs, without either the life or the power of it, may yet be ſo complete a form, that no man can diſcern the difference. And how hard muſt it be for thoſe who delude themſelves into a perſuaſion

ſuaſion that they are very good Chriſtians, and for thoſe who in charity reckon them ſuch, to believe, that there is any thing eſſential to faith which they themſelves are ſtrangers to. And in this they are doubly unhappy. Thus thoſe who take them to be good Chriſtians are led into the ſame ſnare, and never attempt to riſe higher than ſuch and ſuch very good men do.

2. There is another ſort of men who are yet more dangerous, as their abilities and reputation are greater than ordinary Chriſtians: men who ſet up for teachers and inſtructors of others, while themſelves are ſtrangers to the nature of the goſpel, and the power of godlineſs. Many of theſe have been men of great natural abilities, with all the advantages of human learning: and when they are likewiſe of unblameable lives, as many of them have had a rigid monkiſh auſterity, much beyond what true Chriſtianity either requires or admits, their aſſertions come with redoubled weight; and it is the hardeſt thing in the world to perſuade thoſe who are ſtrangers to Chriſtianity, that ſuch men can be miſtaken; eſpecially

ly when mens corruption is handſomely ſoothed, by making the way to heaven more eaſy than Chriſt and his Apoſtles have made it.

Such a man was Pelagius of old: not that he was the firſt who corrupted the goſpel of Chriſt; but the moſt remarkable, from whom the men of that way took their name. His capital error was, miſtaking the conſtitution of grace for a plan of moral government; and obedience to the divine laws for the only way to the favour of God and eternal life. Hence he concluded, that every man muſt be furniſhed with ſufficient powers for obedience: all depended on the man's free will; and there was no occaſion for grace, but to encourage and reward obedience above its real and intrinſic deſert and worth. And were it true, that the conſtitution of grace was only a perfect plan of moral government, and no new creation-work, as many conceive of it to this day, Pelagius's ſcheme was certainly a right one.

But when he appeared, as the doctrine of grace was yet preſerved, not only in the notions, but in the hearts, of Chriſtians, his ſcheme was univerſally condemned;

demned; and, down to this day, no body cares for taking up in terms, what was, in thoſe primitive times, condemned as hereſy: and yet great numbers proceed upon the ſame original plan of moral government, viz. obedience to the laws of Chriſt, which they term the goſpel, and the powers of what they call free will. They ſave themſelves from the charge of Pelagianiſm, by bringing in the word *grace*; but with them it is the ſame thing that he called *nature:* and on this plan, as no man could be ſure of his perſeverance unto the death, he could never be ſure of eternal life until he came there. And, for the love of Chriſt, and his death, with them it is a common theme, That they who are eternally damned, have juſt as much intereſt in both, while in this world, as the beſt ſaint in heaven.

Nay, and even among thoſe who maintain the ſpeciality of Chriſt's love, and the efficacy of his death, who attribute nothing to nature, but all to grace, there are many who will not allow the aſſurance of particular application to be any of the direct acts of faith, but to be inferred by reflection on what they find in themſelves;

partly becauſe they cannot perceive what they reckon a rational foundation for it in the ſtate of the goſpel, as it lies before us; and partly from a tenderneſs they have for weak believers, and what, they think, is the experience of true Chriſtians. The warrants the Chriſtian has for particular application, and the experience of Chriſtians, we have met with already; and for weak ſerious ſouls, the tenderneſs they ſpeak of is the moſt cruel thing that can be done to them, as it has a direct tendency to ſooth them at beſt in a ſtate of imperfection, and make them careleſs about advancing, and, which is yet worſe, puts them in a way where it is ſimply impoſſible they can ever attain any ſettled aſſurance. It is by the marks of grace they find in themſelves, they muſt gather up their intereſt in Chriſt. But theſe, at beſt, are ſo imperfect, that no laſting aſſurance can be founded upon them; and no wonder they are kept in uncertainty all their lives who lay the foundation of their aſſurance in themſelves. But however that is, ſo long as men teach thus, ſo long will ordinary Chriſtians, or rather thoſe who are on the way to be ſuch,

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ſooth themſelves in their unbelief and doubting, ſuppoſing that the want of aſſurance is their unhappineſs, but not their ſin; aſſurance itſelf being a high attainment, far above the reach of common Chriſtians. And when they have ſuch authorities, it is no wonder, that the ſlighteſt temptations ſhould prevail to keep them in that unhappy ſtate of doubt and uncertainty.

3. This is much helped forward by the unhappy diviſions, and the ſects and parties, that are formed among Chriſtians. It is impoſſible, in this imperfect ſtate, that ever we ſhall attain ſuch meaſures of knowledge, that all, even real Chriſtians, ſhall be of the ſame mind. Peter and Paul, Paul and Barnabas, had their differences; but they knew where to ſtop. There are, without queſtion, greater and leſſer matters in the goſpel-ſtate, as well as in the law, ſome eſſential, ſome only circumſtantial, where men may, and, as matters ſtand, muſt differ. Good and godly men have, in their zeal for truth, often put more upon ſome points than ever they were deſigned to bear; nay good men may miſtake ſo far as to take things for truths of God, which yet are no more

than their own imaginations. And yet it is commonly on theſe diſputed points that Chriſtians, very honeſt Chriſtians, beſtow their zeal, and count it zeal for the Lord. Thoſe who would be Chriſtians, but are not yet acquainted with the ſpirit and power of Chriſtianity, perceiving thoſe whom they reckon the beſt Chriſtians moſt intent upon the party-truths, reckon theſe the main things; and as a very warm zeal for theſe is eaſily attained, they are entered into a party inſtead of Chriſt, and count themſelves ſomething beyond others, while in reality they are nothing. Thus, the leaders unhappily miſpending that labour on externals which ſhould have cultivated the ſpirit and power of religion, hurt themſelves, and miſlead multitudes, even while they are ſo far in the right way.

4. I only mention the corruption that is in the world through luſt; a bundle which contains a multitude of deſtroyers, to the miſleading and ruining the bulk of Adam's children. Theſe are natural blindneſs, and corrupt biaſſes, the courſe of a very corrupt world, with which we all ſtand very ſtrongly connected, and eſpecially

cially the powerful working of an unſeen, but cruel and unrelenting adverſary, who "goeth about like a roaring lion, ſeek-"ing whom he may devour;" and whoſe ſole aim it is, to keep ſouls from Chriſt. This cunning foe will give men no trouble, go as far as they will in the ſtricteſt morality, in the moſt fervent form of devotion, in the greateſt mortification and good works: if he can but keep them from Chriſt, from the reſt which faith finds in his dying love, he knows his work is done. And in fact the moſt auſtere profeſſors of morality, natural devotion, (that is, ſuch as has no regard to Chriſt), and good works, are the moſt implacable enemies to the faith of Chriſt, and living by faith.

5. I ſhall only add one other cauſe of that unhappy miſtake. The ſerious ſoul, diſtreſſed with a feeling ſenſe of ſin, doth often too haſtily catch at eaſe and relief, before God's time to reveal the reſt which he has prepared in his Son, and the wonders of his dying love: and there is ſeldom wanting ſome over-tender friend to hold out ſome ſlender twig for him to hang by. It is no ſmall mercy to a ſoul where

where God breaks ſuch hurtful holds, which keep them from that anchor which is caſt within the vail, ſure and ſtedfaſt; which may and which only can be ſafely truſted to, Heb. vi. 19.

AND now the natural improvement of all that we have ſaid, is, to rectify miſtakes about Chriſtianity, and the Chriſtian life which we profeſs; to give us juſt and proper apprehenſions of it, wherein it lies, and how it is attained; to be a directory to us in our heavenly courſe; and, at the ſame time, furniſh us with the moſt powerful and prevalent motives. I thought once to have extended theſe into proper heads, and drawn out a ſort of ſketch under each of them; but having ſo far exceeded the meaſure I deſigned, and the whole being laid with theſe theſe views, it would be but repeating again what I have been ſaying, and much of it oftener than once from the beginning. Only as the laſt appears to be of ſo very great moment, as in effect the whole Chriſtian life, at leaſt the vigour and activity of it, depends on it, I ſhall lay together a few conſiderations for impreſſing our

our hearts with a dutiful regard to it, both on account of the manifold evils that attend our ſtopping ſhort, and the unſpeakable advantages of keeping the dying love of our Redeemer, in the moſt particular application of it, in our view.

The unhappineſs of thoſe who ſtop ſhort of the Apoſtle's faith, will appear from the following conſiderations.

1. It is reſting in a very ſinful way. Moſt miſerably are they miſtaken who reckon it only a piece of unhappineſs, and no fault of theirs. In ſome caſes indeed it may be ſo. In the firſt converſion of a ſinner, and his entrance into the ſpiritual life, his wiſe conductor may have very great and very kind purpoſes to anſwer, by keeping him in uncertainty about his ſtate, and what may be the event. The ſame caſe may fall out in other periods of it, as it ſhall pleaſe that Spirit on whom he depends, to withdraw his light, in which only a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt can be ſeen. It is not the ſimple want of it I call a ſin, but wilfully reſting and ſoothing one's ſelf in it. This is unbelief; it is neglecting the moſt valuable part of Chriſt's ſalvation; it is undervaluing his love;

love; and, which is worſt of all, impeaching his faithfulneſs, and deſpiſing his authority.

2. It is moſt fooliſh to reſt in an uncertainty in a matter of ſuch moment, and where there is ſo much danger. You dare not ſay, *Chriſt has loved me, and given himſelf for me*; that, you think, would be preſumption; then as certainly you dare not ſay but you may be damned eternally, and that the wrath of God abides on you. You will ſay, you hope it is otherwiſe. But what is the foundation of your hope? You can have none but in the love of Chriſt, and his having died for you. If you ſay you hope ſo, is that enough? It ſays you are not ſure, and is that a condition to be reſted in? There cannot be a ſurer ſign of one's being yet in the gall of bitterneſs, and the bond of iniquity, than to reſt our eternal ſalvation on ſuch an uncertain hope, and live eaſy under it.

3. It renders one incapable of many of the principal duties of the Chriſtian life, and very weak and feeble in all. I had occaſion to ſhow, how incapable it makes one of the love of God and Chriſt, of confidence

fidence in him, and giving him the glory that is due unto his name: and what is religion without theſe, but an empty ſhadow, and dead form? And even in the outward duties of life, whether toward God, or man, our ſtrength, our courage, is gone, like Samſon when he loſt his hair: How eaſily are we overcome! What a poor pitiful caſe is this! And hence,

4. This is the great, and in effect the only cauſe, of that barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs which are ſo apparent in profeſſors of this ſtamp. And how can it be otherwiſe? There can be no fruit in the branches, but by ſap derived from the root. It is by abiding in Chriſt that the beſt Chriſtian can thrive: if he lives not in him, he muſt die. It is only by the confidence of faith, or particular application for one's ſelf, that any man can abide in him. That cannot be done, but by perceiving and believing his love. It is love only that can beget love: and it is from this inward ſpring that all our fruit flows. Love is the fulfilling of the whole law; and, without it, no duty can be done. And how dreadful the end of unfruitfulneſs and barrenneſs in the Lord's

vineyard is, appears from what is written, John xv. 2. 6. "Every branch in me that "beareth not fruit, he (the huſbandman) "taketh away;" and they are caſt out and wither, and are gathered and burned.

But, on the other hand, where the love of Chriſt, and of the Father in him, is known and believed, how happy the man! For,

1. It is a very heaven upon earth; peace, ſafety, confidence, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; all the pleaſures of love elevated and exalted to the higheſt pitch, ſomething greatly above the moſt perfect friendſhip, and that is the moſt exalted enjoyment the world knows any thing of. "This "is my beloved, and this is my friend." How ſuperlatively happy! All fears, all ſorrows, all cares, are effectually prevented, and ſet aſide for ever.

2. It breaks the force and ſtrength of every temptation. So ſays the Apoſtle, "the ſhield of faith quenches all the fiery "darts of the devil." It does ſo effectually, by the protection it puts the ſoul under in Chriſt; it does ſo, by the ſenſe and feeling of our happineſs in him. The world, and all that Satan can find there

to

to bait his ſnares and gins with, are nothing; the victory over that is complete; it is crucified to the man in Chriſt, and he is crucified to it.

3. It reconciles the ſoul to every lot, and makes the circumſtances which, in the eye of the world, are moſt contemptible and diſagreeable, perfectly eaſy and pleaſing. It gives perfect contentment, and that is more than the poſſeſſion of the whole world can do.

4. It makes one uſeful in the world; recommends the ways of Chriſt, and adorns the doctrine of the goſpel; gives a good example, and a convincing evidence of the truth and reality of religion. And,

5. It is the way, the only way, to prepare the heirs of glory, and to make them fit for heaven. Their converſation is there; there is their treaſure, and there is their heart; and their buſineſs here is but to wait all the days of their appointed time, until their change come; looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

But how ſhall we attain ſo happy a

ſtate? It is in God's hand, it is a gift of his grace; and until he ſhall be pleaſed to beſtow it, and to give that Spirit of faith which leads into all truth, vain are all the attempts of man.

They are indeed ſo; and if ever we propoſe to proſper, we muſt lay this as a foundation, "That of ourſelves we can "do nothing;" and never flatter ourſelves ſo far as to place any dependence upon the outward means of grace, however careful and diligent we are in the uſe of them; as very careful and diligent we will be, if we are indeed in earneſt. Neither muſt we expect any thing from man, not from the beſt Chriſtians or miniſters; though their aſſiſtance is not to be neglected. Our eyes muſt be on him alone who is the light and life of man.

But, at the ſame time, he has laid down a way which he has promiſed to bleſs, and it is the way of faith; and he has warranted us to go on in an abſolute dependence on and entire confidence in him, whatever difficulties and diſcouragements we may meet with in our way. And indeed we may be put to wait long, and even meet with many things that look like abſolute

abſolute refuſals, as the woman of Canaan did. But we have this for our encouragement, That never any followed and waited, (for faith has always patience for its companion, Heb. vi. 12. x. 36. They that believe, never make haſte); never any, I ſay, waited, but in the end had their errand and more. Himſelf hath ſaid, "Him that cometh to me, I will in "no wiſe caſt out."

The only direction then I would give, is that which God gave Moſes for the Iſraelites when they were in the moſt deſperate caſe men could be in, ſhut up between the Egyptians and the Red ſea: "Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that "they go forward." This, we find, was the Apoſtle Paul's practice: "Forgetting "the things that are behind, and mind-"ing only thoſe things which are before, "I preſs toward the mark, for the prize "of the high calling of God in Chriſt Je-"ſus," Phil. iii. 15. And thus he exhorts us, Heb. vi. 12. "That we be not ſlothful, "but followers of them, who through faith "and patience inherit the promiſes."

The End of the Second Volume.

The Third Volume, which completes this Book, is in the preſs, and will be publiſhed ſome time in the enſuing ſummer.

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